



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600062565U







Yours Affectionate Sister
F. Thomas D. Bell

.
 .
 .



Last Hours

WITH

Cousin Kate.

WITH

MEMOIR AND PORTRAIT.

B. A.

EDINBURGH:

W. P. KENNEDY, 79, GEORGE STREET.

GLASGOW: D. BRYCE & CO. LONDON: HAMILTON & CO.

DUBLIN: M'GLASHAN & GILL.

1862.

250. g. 223.



MURRAY AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

THE following are a collection of Miss BELL's Stories, which were written at various times. Some of them have been published before, some have not. 'Little Nelly,' and the 'Garden,' were published some years ago ; but many friends have expressed a wish that they should be republished. 'George and Alick' appeared in the *Family Treasury* in 1859 ; and we have to thank the Messrs Nelson for having permitted us to republish it, and some other of the stories which they had.

A few pieces of poetry are added, not so much for the poetry, as to show the sentiment.

MEMOIR.



DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS, in sending out the last volume which you can ever have from the pen of Cousin Kate, whose stories you have so kindly welcomed from year to year, I think it may be both a pleasure and a profit to you to know something of her own life ; to know that in all the bright, trusting, happy views which religion gives to May, Rosa, Hugh, Eugene, Lily, in the midst of their little difficulties, sorrows, or temptations, it was but the reflection of her own bright, trusting, happy heart, which rested on the sure promises of her blessed Saviour : that they who put their trust in Him shall never be left desolate, and that He will keep them in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Him. She learned early to love the beauties of nature, and to see the love and care of God in all these things around her. She had always a cheerful and strong spirit, and a warm heart to all around her, and had great enjoyment of life in all its circumstances. She was one of a large family. Her twin sister, a sweet patient child, died when only six years old, after a year of great suffering

from the effects of scarlet fever. This seemed to have a great influence on Cousin Kate, in making her thoughtful and serious about another world, even at that early age. Her summers were always spent in the country, which nurtured in her that strong love of nature, in all its forms, which you see in her books. The long illness of her eldest sister, who was a centre of love to the whole family, from her gentleness and long helplessness, seemed also a means of deepening and softening Cousin Kate's naturally strong and energetic character. This showed itself in all her pursuits. In her studies, she was very keen and earnest. The French class described in 'Rosa's Wish,' recalls most vividly to her friends the French class which she herself attended.

She used to say that she could not remember the time when she had not been conscious of loving God. But, we believe, that it was when thinking of making an open profession of religion, by going to the communion for the first time, that she received the very strong impressions on the one hand of her own utterly depraved and lost condition, and on the other, of the unfathomable love of Christ in dying for her, and of His unbounded and unfailing grace in supplying all her daily and hourly need. She was very earnest in seeking to recommend this loving Saviour and His service to all whom she could reach. For some years she visited in a district connected with her church; and some of the cases she met with are alluded to in the papers she wrote for the 'Scottish Sabbath School Teachers' Magazine,' and appeared in volumes 8 and 9 of that work. But the Lord had a different work

for her to do. And from henceforth the seed sown by her was not to be from her own hand going about in the Lord's vineyard; but from a couch of weakness, and often severe suffering. And how widely and effectually it was scattered, there are many proofs, even now, though eternity alone will show how many souls have been won for the Saviour's crown. From this stationary star rays went forth which enlightened many a heart, and many a dwelling, and, no doubt, in God's hand, guided many of the young in the way of life.

For thirteen years she was laid aside from active service in the cause of her dear Lord, by severe illness, from which she never recovered; though she was at times able to walk about a little, and was always able to go to the country for two or three months in the summer. She suffered a great deal of pain during these long years, but she was never known to sink under it into fretfulness or dejection, as so many invalids have done. But the constant sense of the presence of her loving Saviour upheld her. Her delight in everything beautiful was also a great source of happiness to her, in her long illness. This, you will see, dear young friends, in her books. The beauty of a sunbeam, shining through the young leaves of the trees in front of her house, in early spring, the effects of a beautiful sunset among the hills at Crieff, or on the sea-shore at North Berwick, or the sun dancing on the waves, brought forth the descriptions you have enjoyed in her books.

A friend writes, 'I cannot tell you what a comfort

Kate's books are to me, other people's writings are something apart from themselves, they bring before you thoughts and feelings that did not come out in their every-day life, so many people can write what they don't speak ; but Kate's writing, and speaking, and acting, all went together, there was no holding back in anything. And you read a bit of one of her books, and see her before you directly ; I always told her they were as good as a great many letters, and I feel them so now.'

It was shortly before she was laid aside from active exertion that she began to write the books for her young friends. She had been in the habit of telling the stories to the young people who surrounded her. In those stories there are many living characters, many scenes of her own life, and the lives of her friends ; and the principles which she tries to enforce on her readers, are always those which she took as her own guide, and endeavoured to put in practice. In the autumn of 1859, there was a decided improvement in her health, which to her friends, and even to herself, gave hopes that the state of bodily helplessness might yet be exchanged for her former active labours in her Saviour's cause. But this was not her heavenly Father's will. Before long a new disease manifested itself, and gave new exercise to those graces of patient and cheerful submission to her Father's will, which to others had already seemed so fully wrought in her. In this new furnace they shone forth yet more brilliantly. Though fully aware of the dangerous nature of this disease, and of the sufferings it might entail on her, her cheerful

resignation and happy spirit never failed ; though to those around who knew her state, the light heartedness of former days seemed to be exchanged for a more calm and subdued joy. As she herself said, the thought of the future seemed at times to come over her as a cloud, though no one around her perceived it.

In the spring of 1860, it was found necessary that she should submit to a very serious operation. She felt that she might die under it, and left a message with a very dear friend for her family, in case it should be so. She told her friends that while waiting for the doctors before the operation, God Himself seemed to bring into her mind that verse, Genesis vii. 16, 'The Lord shut him in,' and was at peace. Though it was several months before she recovered from this illness, she seemed to grow stronger and better that summer and the next winter, till March 1861, when a second operation was necessary, and she never recovered from this. The previous Sabbath, when at church (for she was able to go there occasionally), she had felt completely overcome, when singing the second verse of the 57th Psalm,—

‘ My cry I will cause to ascend
Unto the Lord most high,
*To God who doth all things for me,
Perform most perfectly.*’

A friend who was near her at the time, has often said since, that she felt as if it were impossible that Kate would live long, there was such a look of elevation about her face that day. She was able to go to the

country that summer, and had as keen enjoyment of every thing beautiful as she had ever had. She was able to go about a good deal in an invalid chair, and occasionally in a carriage ; but her strength and her constitution were evidently giving way. She had very severe sufferings and great weakness ; but still she bore up, cheerful and thoughtful of others, to the last, unwilling to let those she loved see how much she suffered. If a groan were occasionally extorted by the severe sufferings, she immediately said, ' Oh, why did I groan ? It was very stupid.' And during the night, if her sister came to her on hearing her groan, she would exclaim, ' I am so sorry I disturbed you, dearie. I did not think you would hear me. I wish I could be more patient.' On her sister saying that she knew the pain was very great, and that she could not help groaning, she would sometimes look up with a smile, saying, ' Oh, you don't know. Perhaps it is not so great as you think.' Soon after she came to town in the middle of October, she was completely confined to bed. She had great peace and happiness ; often saying to those around her, that she was very sorry to leave them, for she knew they would miss her, but that all was well for her. She said that every time she felt a new pain, it seemed as if God were putting His hand on her, and saying, ' It is I, be not afraid ; and the love that I have for you, is the same as the love I have for My own Son.' She sent a message to the church of which she was a member, asking for a place in their prayers ; not to ask for the removal of sufferings, but to praise God for all His loving kindness and innumerable mercies to

her, and to ask more gratitude to be given to her. She rejoiced in counting up her 'blessings,' as she called them. Every new comfort or relief from pain, which the kindness of friends or of doctors afforded, was added to this list, and gratefully dwelt upon. This was the constant tendency of her feelings to the last. She was always ready with her joyful sympathy in any verse of the Bible, or message from friends, speaking of the love of that Saviour whom she felt to be a 'very glorious Husband, leading her in His own way to a very glorious home.' Kind friends kept her constantly supplied with fresh flowers to the last. She loved to have them put on a table at the window near her bed, where the morning sun shone on them, and delighted her with their beauty. Her death was literally a falling asleep. She told her sister that there was no darkness in the valley, for Jesus was there.

She had said that she had great peace and joy, such as she could not have imagined; and that she knew that God might see it best to take that away for a time, and send a cloud, but 'what does it matter? I am in His hands, and I know that He will do what is best.' It seemed as if patience had its perfect work in her, and God's grace having made her willing even to submit to this last trial, it was not sent, for there was never a shadow of a cloud on her bright spirit.

She died on the 15th of November 1861.

Extract from a Letter from a Friend, on hearing of her dangerous Illness.

Strange to say, I have been prepared for the last month for hearing the sad news. I have lost hope of seeing that dear face again. To her, for herself, there is no sorrow, I know, in going. It is a prospect of happiness unspeakable, and joy that we cannot even imagine here. But it does make a terrible feeling of emptiness in the world to us who are left, to think of her being out of it. God's appointed time for her being here is nearly over. I have felt that all this past month; and she is going to hear—'Well done, good and faithful servant.' And we, dear G——, the time wont be long for any of us, if we can only attain to that heavenly rest where she is going now so soon. One clings so to earthly props and helps. I suppose we must learn now that God and our Saviour live, if the help of darling Kate's bright strong spirit, and her strong faith is taken from earth; and we must cling more to Him, and live nearer to Him.

I don't think I could ever lose the power of recalling her perfectly to my mind, lying on her sofa, by the middle window, with the aquarium beside her. She always comes to me perfectly, as if I had seen her yesterday, and I believe always will, better than any number of photographs. I can shut my eyes and see every line of her face,—always happy looking and bright. It will look happier still when we can see it no longer.

[This was written the very day of her death, though

the friend, being abroad, did not hear of it for some time after.]

*Extracts from Letters from two Friends, on hearing of
Kate's Death.*

I saw the notice of Cousin Kate's death in the newspaper before I got your kind letter. I remember being greatly taken with 'Cousin Kate' the first time I saw her; and the more I met with her, the more was I charmed and delighted. Hers was one of the brightest, happiest, sunniest, most patient, most loving spirits I ever met with. Her weak health was so sanctified to her, and she was so resigned and joyful in tribulation, that her adoption of God was quite transparent. Of her, we might have truly said with John,—'Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.' And then, her desire to serve God and do good to others, and the work she achieved, amid so much bodily weakness and pain, was a spectacle of Christian heroism rarely met with in this world. I see her reclining on her couch, with her books, or her needle-work, beside her, and her tasteful vase of plants at her side, bright, happy, and contented. Were I to enter the room, the first thing my eyes would fall on, would be that empty couch. But she is now on her throne of glory, the same loving and joyous soul she ever was, with only this difference, that weakness and pain have now passed away for ever. Dear as she was,—much, oh, how much, as you must

miss her,—who of you would call her back to that empty couch ?


‘ Why, then, should your tears run down,
And your hearts be sorely riven,
For another gem in the Saviour’s crown,
And another soul in heaven ? ’

No one can express what a blessing, and comfort, and happiness, it has been to me, to know and love Kate. She had such a bright, healthy sort of mind, strong and patient,—so very patient with the weaknesses which she had so few of herself,—and so full of love and trust in God her Saviour. The thought of her was always a help and support to me. There never was any expression of religious feeling, but what we knew was there in the very bottom of her heart ; nothing overstrained, or morbid, as there is about so many good women ; true, and honest, and upright, what a comfort it is to think of her.

LITTLE NELLY.

CHAPTER I.

The Father's Death.



NT was getting very late. The early winter night had quite closed in, and the room with its small window, never very light in the brightest summer sunshine, was now dark and gloomy indeed. The fire had got so low that it gave almost no light ; and little Nelly was afraid to rise to seek fresh peat, or to light her rushlight, lest she might awaken her poor father out of the first quiet sleep he had enjoyed for many days.

So she sat there quite still, sometimes rejoicing in his quiet sleep, and thinking how much better he would be when he awoke ; sometimes wishing that her mother were at home to see and rejoice in his present freedom from pain ; sometimes hoping she would not come back too soon, lest the children should come with her, and their voices awake him ; and sometimes regretting that she could not get on with her work, and poor wee Alley in such need of his coat.

At last, as she sat thus thinking, she heard her father move ; and then his feeble voice asked, ' Is that you, Nelly ? '

'It is little Nelly, father; mother is not come home yet,' she said, hastening to his bedside.

'Ay, ay, it's you I want, my bairn. I've something to say, and I want to say it to you. You've a deal of sense, my bit lassie; and it is a deal of learning that Miss Helen has given you, the Lord be about her.'

'Yes, father,' said the girl, trembling, she knew not why, at the thought that *her* learning and *her* sense were necessary.

The sick man seemed quite exhausted with what he had said. He tried several times to speak, but was too weak; and as Nelly bent down anxiously to listen, all she could hear was in a broken voice—

'Oh, if I had but strength, I want so sore to speak.'

'The jelly, father, Miss Helen's nice jelly; could you take some of it?' said the poor girl anxiously.

He made a feeble sign of assent. She lighted a rush-light, brought the cup of jelly, and then getting upon the bed, she contrived, with a dexterity that showed long practice, to support his head against her breast, whilst her two hands were left free to hold the cup, and to feed him with a spoon. The cool jelly seemed to be very pleasant to his dry, hot mouth, and he took all that was in the cup. Then she gently laid his head back upon his pillows; and seeing him close his eyes, she hastened to put fresh peat upon the fire, lest he should fall asleep again.

She had scarcely done so when he again called her, but in a firmer voice. 'Mother is out, you said, Nelly?' he asked.

'Ay, father, she's gone to the chapel to make a station for you that you may get well.'

'Ah, that's what it's about,' he said with a groan. 'It's that I want to know, I so want to be sure.'

'To be sure about what, dear father?'

'To be sure about the right, bairn. About the stations, and purgatory. Ah, Nelly, I so want to be sure about *that*.'

And he rolled his head from side to side on his pillow, repeating, 'To be *sure*. Oh, if I could but be sure!'

Nelly watched him for a few minutes in great anxiety; and then, casting a frightened glance round, as if she dreaded any one hearing her, she whispered—

'Father, Miss Helen says there is no purgatory.'

'Ay, bairn,' he said, 'I mind you told me that before, and it's come over me often and often when I've been lying here. But if there is no purgatory, and no masses to take my soul out of it, how can I get to heaven? Ah, bairn, bairn, if there's no purgatory, it must be hell for me; and it's that that fears me. Ah, if I could but know, but be *sure*. I've been sober, and honest, and hard-working; but oh, my bairn, I've never loved the great God, who bids us love Him; and if there's no purgatory, it must be hell for me.'

'Father,' said the girl again in the same low, earnest whisper, 'Miss Helen says, and so does the priest, that the Lord Jesus Christ bore the punishment for sinners, and that He died here that we might live for ever in heaven. His blood cleanseth from all sins.'

'Ay, ay, my bairn,' and his face brightened; 'I often mind that, and sometimes, when I am half-dream-

ing, I just seem to see it like a strong ladder between heaven and earth; and it seems quite sure, and I think I can surely win to heaven upon that. But then, my bairn, there's so many props and stays for the ladder, —masses and penances, and prayers to the Virgin, and the saints, and all. And oh, Nelly, how can I be sure but some of these may give way, and so all come down. I cannot be sure, I cannot be sure, and it's that I want. A "maybe" did well enough before; but oh, I must be sure now.'

'But, father,' said the child eagerly, 'if it's the Lord's truth, it cannot come down. Think, father, it's the Lord of heaven and earth that sent that ladder; and He'll never leave it to our poor bit sticks and worthless props of prayers and penances to keep it from falling.'

'Ay, but, my bairn, the ladder may be strong and good, and I no able to climb up it. I may need these props and penances to make me fit to go up.'

'But, father, the Bible says, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Whosoever, father, whosoever.'

'But the priest says, we've nothing to do with the Bible, Nelly.'

'But the priest says it's God's word, and so it must be true; and it says, *whosoever*. That's a grand word, father.'

The sick man's face again brightened as he repeated, 'Whosoever—ay that's grand, that's good.' But then the shade came over again, and he said—

'But the priest says we cannot understand the Bible,

and we give it wrong meanings ; and maybe even that grand word is not for me.'

'Maybe there are some verses we may give wrong meanings to. But, father, this is so plain, everybody can understand this. How can we give a wrong meaning to this? And then, father, Miss Helen says, that it's not as if our Lord Jesus Christ had just died for us, and that was all ; but He rose from the dead, and He is living now ; and if He comes down, and takes care of you, and carries you up the ladder to heaven Himself, surely you must be safe.'

'Ay, ay, my bairn, that is what I want.'

'And the Bible says, father, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd ; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." It is not even like a bairn, father, that would maybe be holding on round his neck, and so you might be afraid your arms might get weary, and lose hold. But it is a lamb that cannot hold on at all, and the shepherd must just keep his grip of it ; and the Lord's grip maun be a sure grip, father.'

'Ay, ay, bairn, that is sure, sure for the lambs. But, Nelly, my woman, the lambs are pure, and good, and gentle ; and I'm a wicked, God-forgetting sinner. Oh, bairn, I'm more like a wolf than a lamb.'

'Ah, but, father, Miss Helen read me this word too : 'He (God) made Him (Christ) to be sin for us who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' That means, that we might be counted perfectly good in Him. Christ is called a lamb ; and if *all* His goodness is given to us to be ours, we'll be called lambs too. So, you see, father, you can be just like a

poor feckless lamb in His arms, and then ye must be sure, ye must be safe, for He's the Lord o' heaven and earth.'

'Ay, ay, I must be sure. Blessings on Miss Helen, and blessings on you, my ain lassie. That's what I wanted. That's being sure. Ah, to be sure, that is the blessing, and I must be sure in His arms; and it is not to purgatory He'll carry me; and it's not my sorrow in purgatory or your masses can be needed, when it's the great Lord of all who has made it sure, *sure*.'

And he closed his eyes, and a look of peace and rest came over his face while he softly repeated, 'Ay, ay, sure, sure. That is the blessing, to be sure.'

John M'Lean was a simple-minded, very ignorant man. He was a Romanist, because all his forefathers had been Romanists; and he had never thought it possible he or any of his could be anything else. He believed all that the priest told him to believe, whether he understood it or not; and had never thought it possible that he could do otherwise. He knew there were people who were called heretics, knew that Mr M'Neil, the Presbyterian clergyman, and his small congregation, were of that class; but he did not in the least know why they were called so, and in what they were different from himself. As the priest told him heretics must be damned everlastingly, he prayed often to the Virgin to make good Catholics of the kind Miss Helen, who had taught his little Nelly so many good things, and of her father, who was always so ready to help any one in distress; but he did not at all know that the 'good things' Miss Helen taught Nelly, were fast turning his own darling into a heretic.

No one had ever taken any pains to make him understand what a heretic was, what Roman Catholics or what Protestants believed. The priest himself was an ignorant, as well as an indolent man. The great majority of the inhabitants of that district had been Roman Catholics for many generations; and there had never been any one to interfere between the priest and his flock, or to arouse the jealousy of the former by attempts to proselytize. One careless, worldly-minded minister had succeeded another in the charge of the small Presbyterian congregation, and none had ever cared to inquire into the condition of the poor blind Papists around them.

Within the last two years, however, a very different man had come among them. The present minister, Mr M'Neil, was an earnest servant of the Lord, and his whole heart was devoted to bringing souls to the knowledge of the Saviour.

His own flock had been so long neglected, and were in such a cold, heartless state, that his time was at first fully occupied with his labours among them; and even after he had begun to direct his attention to the poor Roman Catholics, he was so quiet and judicious, so careful not to awaken the suspicions of the priest, that he was for some time allowed to go on his way without molestation; and while the poor objects of his care were receiving and rejoicing in the blessed truths of the Gospel, they were quite unconscious that these truths were at all different from what their priest believed, and wished them to believe.

Miss M'Neil, Nelly's 'good Miss Helen,' pursued the

same course with her little pupil. The manse was very near John's cottage, and the attention of the minister's family was early attracted to little Nelly. She was such an active, intelligent, pleasant-looking girl, always so busy, and always so smiling and happy-looking, that they all felt much interested in her, and very desirous to be useful to her.

She had had fewer advantages in the way of schooling than most of her young companions. Mrs M'Lean was a delicate, spiritless woman ; and Nelly had at an early age made herself so useful at home, that she could seldom be spared to go to the school, which was nearly three miles away. But when Miss Helen offered to give her instructions for an hour or two every day, and arranged that these two hours should be at such a time as her mother had least for her to do, both parents and child most gratefully accepted the offer. And for nearly two years, Nelly had gone daily to her young teacher, without her father or mother having the least scruple or doubt that there was anything wrong in her doing so. Had the priest been aware of this, he would probably have warned them of the danger of their child becoming a heretic. But he never showed much interest in the concerns of his flock, and John would have thought it 'very bold to trouble his reverence about such a matter.'

Miss M'Neil did not try to convince her pupil of the errors of the Roman Catholic religion ; but she laboured with unwearied, prayerful earnestness to impress upon her heart the precious truths of the Bible. She did not venture to give her the Bible to read ; but she often

read to her such parts as she could easily understand, and she brought it forward to prove every doctrine she taught, and to enforce every duty she inculcated. Nelly knew that the priests forbade the reading of the Bible, but she also knew that they acknowledged it to be the word of God; and I have already told you the simple reasoning with which she satisfied herself and her father as to the propriety of listening to and believing these parts, which were, as she said, 'too plain for any one to give a wrong meaning to.'

Since John had been ill, he had often listened with pleasure to what Nelly repeated to him of her lessons, and had learned many Bible truths without at all knowing that they were taken out of the Bible. He took all the comfort of little Nelly's simple words, and did not in the least perceive how contrary they were to much that the priest had taught him. He was in great, in terrible anxiety about his soul's salvation; and as Nelly said that these words were God's truth, he seized upon them at once, and never thought of inquiring how far they were Roman Catholic or Protestant.

He lay for some time quite still, half-sleeping, and every now and then murmuring, 'Ay, the Lord's grip must be a sure grip, the Lord's goodness must be a perfect goodness. It is all sure now, sure, quite sure.' And Nelly sat beside him sewing busily to make up for lost time, and rejoicing that she had so well remembered Miss Helen's words, and that her father had believed them, and been comforted.

As she glanced at him now and then, she thought he looked very pale and 'wearied-like;' but it was not until

he again called her, and she again stooped over him, that she became aware how very much his face was changed. She did not guess even then that it was the change of death ; but she was frightened, she scarcely knew why, and felt a wild anxiety for her mother's return.

'Don't be feared, my bairn,' said poor John very feebly ; 'I'm just going, Nelly. But mind I'm in the Lord's arms, and I'm no caring about purgatory now ; for if He takes me there, it cannot be a bad place, and He'll take me out of it time enough, I've no doubt. Mind and tell your mother about the poor feckless lamb in the Lord's arms. And, Nelly, mind the money in that drawer is what I owe to puir Tony of the Brae, and ye must not give it to the priest for masses for me. Mind that, bairn, mind it,' and he grasped her hand, and looked anxiously in her face ; 'that's what I wanted to tell you, only my terrible fear about my soul made me forget it.'

Nelly promised she would do all he wished. 'But O, father,' she cried, 'ye're not going to leave us now, O father, and mother no here.'

The sick man gasped for breath ; Nelly held up his head, and he seemed relieved.

'My blessings on her, Nelly,' he said feebly. 'Mind you tell her about the lamb. And tell her and the priest not to be grieved about the want of money for masses for my soul. Tell them I am in the Lord's arms, and then they'll be pleased. I cannot need them if I'm there. Good-bye, my bairn, I am safe. It is all sure now, the Lord be praised.'

And then his words became so broken and low, that

Nelly could not hear them. Then they ceased. A few more long breaths. He opened his eyes suddenly, drew one sigh, and his jaw dropped ; all was over.

Nelly gave a loud scream—she knew not why, for she did not know he was dead—and two or three women from the nearest cottage ran in. She was rubbing his hands in her own, and begging him to shut his eyes, and not to stare so wildly.

‘He has gone over in a dwam,’ she said to the first woman that came in. ‘We must get him warmed.’

‘Ay, ay, my bairn, it’s the last dwam. He’ll never be warm mair,’ said the woman.

But Nelly would not believe her. She insisted on trying every means she had ever seen used to recover him from the long fainting fits he had lately been subject to. The women were all so busy talking to and trying to quiet her, that no one heard the sound of the children’s voices as they passed the window, coming in with their mother, and the poor woman was in the room before any one knew of her approach. She stood for a moment, bewildered and stunned ; the children, amazed and frightened, crept behind her, all their merry prattle hushed. One of the neighbours moved the candle so that the light fell upon the dead man’s face. The poor widow gave one wild look, tried to spring forward to the bedside, and fell heavily to the ground.

Nelly’s bewildered senses were at once recalled by the sight of her fainting mother and the terrified children. While the neighbours raised Mrs M’Lean, and laid her upon the only other bed the room contained,

Nelly took the little two-years-old Alley in her arms ; and in soothing him, and trying to quiet the noisy grief of the older children, she almost forgot her own sorrow.

The poor widow had been away the whole day, performing the painful task of going a certain number of times round the chapel on her knees, hoping thereby to induce the Virgin to intercede for her husband's recovery ; and she was so completely worn out with fatigue and fasting, that she fell into a heavy sleep as soon as she recovered from her faint, without at all understanding what had taken place, or even being conscious where she was. One of their kind neighbours took the older children home with her, and two of the others remained to do all that was necessary to the corpse, and to keep poor little Nelly company in her sad watch by her mother's side. The little Alley would not leave her arms. He fell asleep there, and towards morning the watchers persuaded Nelly to lie down with him beside her mother.

Poor girl, she was glad to be quiet and at rest. She felt giddy and bewildered, and seemed scarcely to know what had happened. Her two well-meaning but ignorant companions distressed her by their constant lamentations that John should have died without a priest, should have gone with all his sins upon him for want of a priest to take them off.

Nelly did not rightly understand what they meant ; and, distracted and confused by their many questions and remarks, she could not get her mind cleared upon the subject. But as she lay quiet and undisturbed beside her mother, she soon began to recollect all that

Miss Helen had taught her about the Saviour and sinners. And soon her doubts and fears were laid to rest by the simple faith, that if Jesus Christ Himself had enabled her father to cast all his sins upon Him, to be washed out in *His* blood, and to put his soul into His hands to be saved by Him, then he could need no 'man' priest to take away his sins; and so, with an earnest prayer to that Lord to take care of her, and teach her what was right, she soon fell into a quiet and refreshing sleep.

Poor girl, she needed all the rest and refreshment she could get for both mind and body, for the whole care and labour of the family was left upon her.

Her mother lay for several days in a stupified, half-conscious state. She scarcely ever spoke, took no interest in anything that was going on around her, and seemed hardly to know or understand that her husband was really gone.

The first thing that aroused her out of this stupor was his funeral. When she saw his body carried out of the house, she seemed at once to awaken to the full sense of her loss; and her sorrow vented itself in such violent and long-continued fits of weeping, that poor Nelly was quite alarmed. The neighbours comforted her, and assured her that her mother would be much the better of thus giving vent to her feelings.

'The tear in the eye takes the weight from the heart,' they said; and they were right. When the violence of her grief had exhausted itself, she became gradually calm, and was able in the evening to ask from Nelly the account of the dying scene. The tears

began to flow again as she listened, but they were quiet and gentle; and she seemed pleased as Nelly described the look of peace upon her father's face, and told how happy he was, resting in his Saviour's arms.

'But oh, bairn,' she said suddenly, 'why did not ye send for the priest? It is a terrible thing to die without the priest.'

'I did not know it was death, mother,' was Nelly's tearful answer. 'But what good could the priest have done him?'

'Her mother stared at her in astonishment and fear, as she repeated—

'What good could the priest do! Bless the bairn! What are ye sayin'? Is it not a mortal sin to die without confessing our sins? Is not the priest needed to take our sins off us, before we go out of this world?'

'But, mother,' said Nelly with simple earnestness, 'father took his sins to the Lord that He might wash them out in His blood, and so he needed no priest to take them off him; and he gave his soul to the Lord that He might save it, and so surely it must be safe.'

Mrs M'Lean looked puzzled and doubtful.

'I do not know, bairn,' she said, with a deep sigh. 'It seems all right that ye say, but Father Philip tells us we must have the priest when we're going away from this life; and surely he knows best.'

'Well, mother, God's truth says, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from *all* sin;" and so, even if it were a sin in poor father not to have the priest beside him at the last, that precious blood will wash it away with the rest, and so we need not be feared for him.

And, at any rate, I can't think that can be sin that could not be helped ; and ye know Father Philip was away, and did not come home till last night.'

This last argument seemed to set the poor widow's heart at rest, and she began to discuss with Nelly their future plans.

John M'Lean had always been a sober, hard-working man; and while he was in health, he had not only kept his family comfortably and respectably, but had also laid up a little sum of money in the bank. But he had been long ill, and out of work; and now the expenses of his funeral, the priest's fees, etc., had swallowed up all that remained of that little fund, and except the two pounds owing to Tony of the Brae, a very few shillings was all they had.

Nelly told her mother about the two pounds which her father had borrowed at a time when he could not send to the bank to draw out his own money, and repeated the promise he had extorted from her, that it should be repaid immediately. The widow assented at once to the necessity of doing so.

'Take it to him to-morrow, Nelly, as soon as ye can, for his bit laddie is very ill, and maybe he'll be wanting to get things for him, and maybe he'll be thinking that we'll not be able to pay it, and so we must set his mind at rest.'

CHAPTER II.

The Priest's Curse.

EARLY the next forenoon, when Nelly was laying out her mother's clothes preparatory to helping her to dress, they were surprised by a visit from Father Philip. The widow, astonished and flurried, scarcely knew whether to be most pleased by such an honour, or vexed to be found in bed, and unprepared to receive him with proper respect.

Nelly, having placed a chair for him with all proper reverence, took up Alley, and ran with him into a neighbouring cottage, lest, as she said, 'he might not be behaving himself before his reverence.' She had to stay for a minute to explain to the neighbour why Alley was given into her charge. She had also to run up the brae behind the cottage, to where the older boys and little Betsy were playing, in order to warn them that they must not come in to make a noise until the priest went away; and then she hastened back, half afraid that Father Philip might come upon the dangerous subject of the masses for her father's soul, and might even persuade her mother to part with Tony's two pounds.

And her fears were not groundless. Father Philip had been lately present at a meeting of Roman Catholic priests, and had been in pretty plain terms admonished that his zeal for the welfare of the Church was sus-

pected to be somewhat cold, and particularly that less revenue was derived from his parish than from any other of equal size in the kingdom. Stung by these reproaches and taunts, he returned home with the firm resolution to be henceforward more strict with his parishioners, and by the large amount of contributions he should exact from them, to prove to his brethren the injustice of their accusations. At John's funeral he heard the neighbours conversing about the circumstances of the family; and the small sum in the bank having been mentioned, he had come to see the widow with the express purpose of extorting from her a goodly proportion of her supposed wealth for masses for her husband's soul.

The fact of John's having died without confession was a fair ground to work upon in exciting her fears for his safety. And when Nelly returned, she found her mother listening, with a face full of misery, to the priest's artfully-drawn pictures of the horrors of purgatory.

'But oh, your reverence, what can I do?' cried the poor woman; 'I'd think no penance too hard, no pilgrimage too great, I'd do anything to save my dear, dear husband, if you'll only tell me what.'

'I hope, Mrs M'Lean,' was the priest's somewhat stern answer, 'that you are not ignorant of the means our holy mother church mercifully provides for this end.'

'By masses, you mean; but oh, your reverence, I've no money to pay for them,' she replied, in a faltering tone of deep anxiety.

‘No money, Mrs M‘Lean?’ he asked, still more sternly.

‘A very few shillings is all I have, and I’ll give every penny of it gladly, joyfully; but it is so little.’

‘And you are sure a few shillings is all you possess?’ he asked again, looking keenly at her.

‘All, all, except two pounds we owe Tony of the Brae,’ she answered, despairingly.

‘It is quite right to pay your debts, but your debt to the holy church ought to be the first thought. Pay these two pounds for masses now, and let Tony wait till you can make up your debt to him. Surely he can wait better than your poor husband can in the fires of purgatory,’ he added, solemnly.

Nelly looked anxiously at her mother; she thought she seemed inclined to yield, and she exclaimed eagerly,

‘But, your reverence, that money is not ours. Father promised to pay it as soon as he drew it from the bank. That money is Tony’s; indeed it is not ours.’

The priest looked at her in indignant surprise, and sternly asked what she knew about the matter, that she should presume to interfere.

‘I know,’ said Nelly, with spirit, ‘that money is Tony’s; and I know the Lord has said, “I love not robbery for burnt-offering!”’

‘And who are you, that presume to teach me?’ he demanded, furiously, ‘who dare to take the holy word into your mouth?’

‘I don’t wish to teach you, sir,’ said Nelly simply, and more humbly; ‘I only wish to tell you the reason why we think it right to keep this money for Tony:

father made me promise to pay it to him, and he said he did not need masses for'——

'I see it all now,' cried the priest furiously, 'I see now why he was content to die without confession. Woman, your husband was a wretched heretic. But I bid ye think where he is now. I bid ye ask yourself if he will now think he needs no masses. Can you not hear his voice entreating you to save him from his torments, and can you hear that voice without pity? Can you think without shuddering on his present state?'

'Hush, man, cruel, heartless that ye are!' cried Nelly, in great agitation; prudence and respect all forgotten in pity for her mother and indignation against the priest. 'How dare ye add sorrow to the full heart? If you really believe it is with my father as you say, you might surely do what you can to save him, without waiting for a miserable bribe of money. That a poor two pounds should be put against a man's soul! Mother, dear mother, you cannot believe it.'

The priest rose hastily, glared upon her for a minute in speechless anger, and then burst forth with a torrent of bitter curses and denunciations. When he had exhausted his store of imprecations, he strode out of the room without casting a look upon the poor trembling woman. He paused at the threshold, and lifting up both hands, exclaimed—

'My curse, the curse of our holy mother church, be upon the house and all it contains, so long as it harbours that cursed heretic, the miserable destroyer of her father's soul, the vile agent of Satan, the blaspheming enemy of God!'

Mrs M'Lean had started up in bed, and looked after him, with a face full of horror. She tried to speak, but could not; and when she heard the door close after him, she sank back upon her pillow, with a groan of utter wretchedness.

'Mother, dear mother, never mind him,' cried Nelly, kneeling by her bedside. 'Don't think the Lord will listen to his curse—bad, cruel man that he is. Dear mother, don't look so wild. Speak to me, mother; oh mother, look at me, don't stare in that way,' she continued, terrified at the vacant look of despair in her mother's face.

But Mrs M'Lean did not seem to hear her. She lay quite still, her eyes fixed on the roof of the bed, with a look of horror and misery.

'Mother, mother,' cried poor Nelly, 'he knows nothing; never mind what he says, don't be afraid of the curse of such a wicked, heartless'——

'Hush, hush!' cried the mother, wildly, again starting up; 'don't speak such wicked words. Have you not done mischief enough already? Bairn, bairn you've broken your mother's heart, and ruined your father's soul. Oh, John, John, darling of my heart, joy of my life, that I should live to hear that said of you, and I not able to help you, able to do nothing for you;' and she called wildly to the priest to come back and take off his curse, promising to do anything, everything he could wish, if he would but bless her poor husband; promising that her life should be one continued penance, if that could do any good; or that she should toil night and day for money to pay him, if he would only say

masses for her dearest John. She took no notice of poor Nelly's tears and entreaties that she would lie down and be quiet, but went on incessantly with her wild, incoherent lamentations, tossing her arms above her head, wringing her hands, rocking herself to and fro, while deep shuddering sobs shook her whole body.

Nelly grew more and more frightened, and knew not what to do; she was afraid to leave her to call for assistance, and was, besides, unwilling that their neighbours should hear her father so spoken of.

'Oh, if Miss Helen would but come!'

A step was heard on the threshold, the latch was lifted. Could it be Miss Helen? No, but it was the person who next to her was the most welcome visitor Nelly could have had. It was a very good old woman, who lived a little distance from them. She was a solitary woman, all her family being married; and she had been of much use to the M'Leans during John's illness, often sitting up with him at night, when his poor wife was worn out, taking the younger children away to keep the house quiet, washing their clothes, and such kind offices. She was one of Mr M'Neil's congregation, so that Nelly could confide to her the cause of her mother's distress more easily than she could have done to any of her Papist neighbours.

Mrs M'Lean seemed quite unconscious of old Nanny's presence; she did not hear, or at least did not heed, what she said to her, but went on with her wild talking and gestures, as before.

'She's almost out of her mind, Nelly. If we could get something to give her, that might quiet her a little,

so that she would hear a body speak. Have you any of that fine draught Mr M'Neil used to send your father? You mind how it used to quiet him when he was restless.'

Yes, the bottle had been filled the very day her father had died, and Nelly ran to fetch it. It was not for some time, however—not till she was completely worn out with her own vehemence—that they could persuade Mrs M'Lean to take it. But when she had done so, the effect was even more immediate and powerful than they had expected. John had taken it for a long while, and Mr M'Neil had several times increased the quantity of the opiate it contained, as the former strength began to lose its effect; so that it was now much stronger than it ought to have been given to one wholly unused to take opiates of any kind.

Neither Nelly nor old Nanny were at all aware of this, and they rejoiced greatly to see the poor widow's sobs cease, and she fall into a sound, heavy sleep.

Old Nanny remained with Nelly for some time, and heard from her more particularly all that had passed. She confirmed Nelly in her hope that the priest's curse could do no harm, and in her belief, which was ever becoming stronger and more cheering, that her father's soul was happy in the presence of his blessed Saviour, to whom he had committed it, and that purgatory was but an idle tale.

In truth, the priest's violence, and avaricious desire for the money, had opened Nelly's eyes more than anything else had ever done; and she had already formed the determination to leave Father Philip's reli-

gion (as she called it) altogether, and to take to Miss Helen's.

When Nanny had given Nelly all the comfort she could, seeing that Mrs M'Lean was likely to sleep quietly for some time, she rose to go, saying that she would take the children home for the rest of the day, and bring them back in the evening, when she could see how the poor woman was, and remain with her all night, if it was necessary.

Nelly, afraid lest her mother's fears about purgatory might induce her afterwards to part with Tony's money, begged old Nanny to take it to him, that so all temptation might be taken away.

'Mother bid me take it the first thing to-day; and as I cannot leave her, will you do it for me?'

Nanny willingly agreed, and went away, leaving Nelly to sit quietly by her mother's bedside, until she awoke.

Miss M'Neil had taught Nelly both to sew and knit very well, and she had always full employment of that kind in making and mending the clothes of the family, for her mother was an indifferent workwoman. She had always been an active little girl, who liked to be ever busy about something or other; and Miss M'Neil had taken great pains to teach her to be industrious and helpful to her mother from principle. As she had become more industrious and useful, Mrs M'Lean had become more indolent and helpless, so that, even before her father's death, the management and work of the little household had been left in her willing hands.

And now, as she sat working by her mother's bedside, her thoughts were as busy as her fingers, planning how

they were to live now that her father was gone, and how she could earn enough to support them all.

She had counted the money left when she paid out Tony's two pounds, and there were only a few shillings. But then their half-year's rent was paid, and they had a fine store of potatoes, a considerable quantity of oat-meal, and a large stack of peats, so that want would be kept from them for a time at least. They had a very good garden, and Sam, her eldest brother, was now getting a big boy. He and she could, she thought, keep it all right between them. They had a cow, which grazed on the wild braes near, without costing them anything, and she was to calve in a few months, and then they would have her calf to sell. The garden, the cow, and the pig, would keep them in food, she hoped, and she must earn the rent by her labour.

Nelly was not dismayed at this prospect. She was willing to work hard, and was not much afraid of wanting employment. The laird, it is true, was an absentee, and there was no rich family in the neighbourhood to give work or help to the poor. But there were several farmers who had large farms, and were, as the country people say, well to do. Her father had been a great favourite with them all, and she felt sure that both they and their wives would for his sake gladly help her in any way they could.

Sometimes extra help was needed in the house upon the occasion of a large washing, a house-cleaning, a sheet-making, or some such press of work; and Nelly was so well known as a clever, handy, as well as industrious girl, that she was almost sure of being the

first to be chosen for such services. Some of the lighter kinds of field labour she could quite well undertake, and could look forward to earning occasionally a few shillings in that way. Perhaps she might even be engaged as a shearer next harvest. Old Nanny said she was a wonderful shearer for her age ; and as some parts of each farm lay in well-sheltered valleys, where the grain was ripe before the shearers who had gone to the lowland harvest could return home, there was generally a great want of hands, and any of the farmers would be willing to engage her, young as she was.

At any rate, if they could get on till harvest, they would do finely then. All the children could glean. Little Betsy could generally earn her own dinner and supper by looking after one or two little children while their mothers were shearing. Though only seven years old, she was a steady, pleasant-tempered little lassie, and was quite contented to sit for hours at a time amusing either her own Alley or a neighbour's child, with making garlands of flowers, singing songs, or playing at bo-peep. Then Mrs M'Lean was well paid by those mothers who went to the lowlands, for taking care of their younger children during their absence. In short, harvest time was a busy and a happy time for each and all.

Besides these more regular employments, there were a few chance ways of earning money. Sometimes a trustworthy messenger was required to go to the nearest town, ten miles off, and Nelly was proudly conscious that she was considered perfectly trustworthy. Sometimes Mrs M'Neil, or some of the farmers' wives, took

a fancy to make preserves of brambles or blaeberreries, and Nelly and her little brothers were well paid for all they could gather. Then Miss Helen had taught her a new and superior mode of making rush-lights, and she could find a ready sale for as many as she could make. And Nelly's heart filled with gratitude and joy, as one after another of these various resources came to her mind; and with simple earnestness she thanked her loving Father in heaven who had given her so many ways of helping her mother.

She had full time for such thoughts, full time to feel first surprise, and then alarm, at the length of Mrs M'Lean's sleep. It was not until late in the afternoon that she succeeded in rousing her enough to persuade her to take some food; and as soon as she had swallowed what Nelly gave her, she fell again into a heavy sleep. She was awakened a second time in the evening by the children coming home with Nanny; but she looked stupid and confused, and complained of headache and sickness, so that both Nanny and Nelly began to fear they had done wrong in giving her the draught.

She awoke on the following morning, however, apparently as well as usual, was able to get up, to go about the house, and to return to all her old habits and occupations.

But though apparently well in body, she was not so in mind; a settled melancholy had come upon her. She never spoke even to Nelly of her husband's death, or of the priest's visit; but a constant expression of misery, almost of despair, told how much these things filled her mind. She seemed to have lost all interest even

in her children, and expressed neither hope nor fear, when Nelly repeated to her all the plans she had laid for the future. Nelly saw, therefore, that everything depended upon herself, that she must both arrange and carry out all measures for the good of the family.

The first thing to be done was to find out how much assistance she could depend upon getting from those to whom she looked for work. And accordingly she set off one morning, about a fortnight after her father's death, to make a long round to all the farms to make known her wishes, and ask what likelihood there was of success.

But here poor Nelly was to meet with a bitter disappointment. Instead of the kindly looks, the warm welcome she had expected, and had until now always met with, one looked coldly and shyly upon her; another seemed distressed and confused; none would promise work; and at last, one more blunt than the rest told her plainly that they could do nothing for her, that the priest had been round all the neighbourhood, and had forbidden every one to give her or her family any assistance.

Had Nelly not been so occupied with her home concerns, she might have been prepared for this. She might have seen coldness and embarrassment in the manners of the neighbours towards her; might have observed that few came now to see her mother, that few now stopped her when she met or passed them on the road, as they had been used to do, to ask for her mother, or to say some kind encouraging word. But she had been too busy to notice this, and the shock

was now all the greater. She quietly thanked her informant for her plain dealing, and then with a sad and utterly downcast heart she took her way homeward.

What could she do? How was she to support the family? The M'Neils could not help her. They were poor themselves, and had already too many claims upon them. There was not a single human creature to whom she could look. Must her dear mother and the children starve, and she not able to help them? And as the picture of want and misery rose before her mind, her courage failed altogether; she sat down upon the bank, and gave way to a bitter fit of crying.

'But crying will do no good,' she suddenly exclaimed, checking her sobs and drying her eyes. 'And what will do good? There is no one to help us, no one! no one!'

But then she remembered, that although there was no *earthly* friend to help, yet they had a Father in heaven, all-willing, all-seeing, all-powerful; and she lifted up her heart in prayer to Him, that He would give her grace to trust Him as her shepherd, who would teach, lead, and support her in all difficulties. And the precious words, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows,' came to her mind, and, comforted and strengthened, she rose and went on her way.

Her day's work had been got through much sooner than she had expected. There had been no pressing invitation to sit down and rest, to stay and get dinner,

or to wait until some little dainty could be got ready for her to take home to her mother. All her visits had been very short; and one advantage was, that she had now time to go to the manse to tell all her difficulties to her kind Miss Helen, and to get from her encouragement and advice as to her future plans.

Sympathy, tender and full, she at once received, but advice and encouragement were more difficult to give. Much as they desired to help her, none of the family at the manse could see any present way of doing so.

‘Has your mother no friends elsewhere, Nelly, to whom you could go, and where you might get work?’ asked Mr M’Neil, after a long and fruitless discussion.

‘She has an aunt in Edinburgh,’ said Nelly; ‘but oh, sir, we cannot leave home: we could never go away from you all, and leave our own bonny hills to live in Edinburgh; it would break mother’s heart.’

And Nelly’s own seemed full at the very thought, as she turned hastily away to hide her tears. Her kind friends felt deeply for all the pain they knew such a plan must cause; but they could see no chance of poor Nelly’s being able to stand against the opposition of the enraged priest. The neighbours had shown already how completely they were under his influence, and how the dread of offending him had triumphed over their kindly feelings of pity for the poor widow and fatherless, and over their old affection for them. And without employment how could they gain a livelihood? They represented the matter to Nelly in its strongest light, and encouraged her to trust in the Lord, to look to Him for comfort and countenance in a strange land;

and they succeeded in reconciling her, in some measure, to the project.

But how could she ever get her mother to consent to leave the house where she had lived with the husband who was now gone, to leave the friends who had loved and known him, and the grave where his body was laid? It seemed impossible that this could ever be done; Nelly had not the least hope that any one could accomplish it.

But she was mistaken. Mrs M'Lean's mind was constantly filled with the fearful images the priest had presented to it, with terrible fears about her husband's state; and a restless desire to escape from all that could recall his image or these thoughts, made her at once seize upon the proposed plan.

The aunt was written to, and answered kindly. She could get them a house at a reasonable rent, and hoped to get them work if they were only willing to be industrious. Their rent had been paid until Whitsunday; and with occasional help from the manse, and from friends whom the M'Neils had interested in their case, they contrived to keep themselves in tolerable comfort until then. And long before that, Nelly was reconciled, nay, eager to go. The coldness of old and well loved friends was a bitter trial, and one which could not be removed even by the increased kindness of the M'Neils, and of those neighbours who belonged to the Protestant Church. And her mother's restlessness increased to such a degree, that she felt glad when the time of their departure came, and when the last sad partings were over.

It was not without much anxiety that the M'Neils bade them good-bye. They saw far more clearly than Nelly did how utterly useless Mrs M'Lean had become, how entirely the welfare of the whole family depended upon Nelly, and she a girl little more than fourteen. They knew better than she did the great difficulty of getting employment in such a town as Edinburgh, and the difference between the expense of living there and in the Highlands. The aunt promised fairly, but perhaps might be unable, though willing, to keep her promises. They had written to the very few friends they had in Edinburgh, to interest them in behalf of the M'Leans; but they knew these friends had already more claims upon them than they were able to satisfy. Still no better plan presented itself, and they could not remain where they were.

In spiritual as well as in temporal matters, Miss M'Neil was anxious about her young favourite. Since the priest's visit, Nelly had openly and decidedly declared herself a Protestant. She had obtained a Bible, read it earnestly and regularly, delighted in it with her whole heart, and had learned to apply its precepts and its promises to her own circumstances, with singular correctness, and a touching simplicity. She realized in a striking degree the constant presence and care of her heavenly Father, rejoiced in this sense of His presence, trusted to Him fully, and endeavoured earnestly to please and serve Him.

But in one so loving, so quick to feel every kindness, so grateful for it, all this might well be, and still she might not be really, savingly united to Christ. She


might have no knowledge of sin, no belief in her own sinfulness, and no sense of her need of Christ as a Saviour, to stand between her and God's just wrath on account of sin. Her love, her gratitude, her delight in God, might all proceed from merely natural feelings, because she had learned to believe that He loved her, cared for her, and watched over her, because all the beautiful images of His tenderness and love contained in the Bible had excited in her heart a natural love and admiration for Him.

And Miss M'Neil sometimes thought that this was all Nelly had yet learned ; and now she was going away among strangers, where there might be no one to take any interest in her spiritual welfare, or, what would be far worse, where she might meet with injudicious Christians, who, delighted with the fair promise her character gave, and with the picturesque simplicity of her religious belief, might flatter her that all was well, and keep her further than ever from the right road.

But there was no help ; they must go, and the kind friends they left could only pray that the all-wise, all-good Lord would Himself guide and teach them.

CHAPTER III.

Nelly in Trouble.

UT not to make my story too long, I must ask you to imagine our friends safely arrived in Edinburgh, where they were most kindly welcomed by their aunt, Mrs Brown. The house she had provided for them seemed to them a very grand place indeed. It was in one of those streets at the south side of the town, which used to be inhabited by the great and wealthy of the land; and their two rooms, with their high roofs and large windows, looked quite magnificent in the eyes of our Highlanders, accustomed to their own small, dark cabin. But to them, the greatest beauty of their new house was, that from the windows could be seen a hill, Arthur Seat,—*the* hill, as they soon learned to call it. It made their new home look like home to them, far sooner than they could have believed possible.

Mrs Brown's assurances that they would easily get plenty of work were quite as flattering by word as they had been by letter.

She had spoken to all her customers about them, and her grocery shop was quite a favourite with the better kind of servants; and they had all promised to speak to their mistresses. And her Jane was a dress-maker, and well employed, and had spoken to all her customers, and shown the 'grand character' Mr M'Neil

had sent them of Nelly. So she was sure they must easily get as much to do as they could wish ; and in a town like Edinburgh there could be no want of work, if one was but willing to do it.

So said and so thought Mrs Brown, who always believed what she wished, and who had met with few difficulties in life to check her hopeful spirit. Her husband, a mason, was a first-rate workman, in constant employment, with high wages. He was a surly-tempered man, but perfectly sober, and never wasted a farthing on drink or idle amusements. Before their marriage he had saved as much money as had enabled him to furnish his house very comfortably, and to stock a shop, over which his wife presided while he was working at his trade. It was in a good situation. Mrs Brown's easy good temper made her a general favourite, and the concern had always been most flourishing. The Browns had therefore never known what want meant ; and Mrs Brown fancied that every one might fare as well as she did, if they were only willing to exert themselves. She saw poverty around her, it is true ; but her husband said that it was ' the people's own fault, —they were lazy, or wasteful, or drunken.' And she believed him, and assured Nelly that if she were not lazy, nor wasteful, nor drunken, she must get on. Nelly believed her, and felt more cheered and hopeful than she had done for many a day. This did not last long. The first thing that startled her was the rent she was told they were to pay for this grand house.

Six pounds a year ! But perhaps there was a good bit of potato ground with it ? Only she did not see it.

‘Potato ground, child!’ cried Mrs Brown, half amused, half angry. ‘What are you dreaming of? Why, where could all the families in the stair get potato ground, in a crowded place like this?’

‘But six pounds a year! and only for house-room! How could they pay it?’ asked Nelly timidly.

‘*Only* for house-room indeed! And was the house-room not worth it? How were they to pay it? Why, what would they think of having to pay fifteen pounds, as she had?’ And Mrs Brown looked angry and vexed. Nelly, unwilling to appear ungrateful for all the trouble she had taken in getting the house made comfortable, said no more; but asked when Mrs Brown would be ready to go with her, as she had proposed, to call on the different friends who had promised to supply her with work.

Whenever she chose, Mrs Brown said,—the sooner the better,—that day if she liked. And she repeated her favourite assertion, that none who were willing to work could want employment in such a place as Edinburgh.

And again Nelly was cheered by the assertion, and set out in high spirits. They spent a fatiguing day in going from one house to another; to a great friend of Mrs Brown’s, who was a housekeeper in a large family where they had always plain work to give out; to another particular friend, a lady’s maid in another large family; to Mrs Somebody, who kept a haberdasher’s shop, and employed a great many sewing girls; to Mrs Somebody else, who was so friendly, and knew half the respectable families in Edinburgh; and so on. And they returned home late in the

afternoon with many fair promises, but with nothing else.

The housekeeper had regaled them with wine and cake; had asked many, and, as Nelly thought, rather rude questions, as to how 'folks contrived to live in the Highlands;' and had dismissed them with the assurance that she should do what she could for them. The lady's maid had been almost too busy to speak to them; but had promised to send for Nelly whenever there was anything for her to do. And, in short, each and all assured her that by-and-bye they certainly would be able to give her work; but not one seemed aware how pressing was her necessity for immediate employment and ready payments. And Nelly went home, wearied and cast down, to count over the few shillings remaining of what the M'Neils had collected for the expense of their journey, and to calculate how long it could be made to last.

And day passed after day, week after week, month after month, and still promises of future employment was all they had got. Their money had been spent long ago. One article after another of their furniture and of their scanty wardrobes had been sold; and now the cold winter months were coming on, and they were without proper clothing, without fire, almost without food.

But Mrs Brown was well off. Could she not help them a little until Nelly was able to get work? She could, and would have done so most gladly, if it had depended on her. But her husband was, as I said, a surly man. He had always been averse to the M'Leans

coming to Edinburgh, prophesying they would come to be a burden on his family; and now, to prevent his prophecy from coming true, he forbade his wife to take any charge of them.

‘Let them go back to their own friends,’ he said, ‘if they cannot support themselves here. Their own parish is bound to provide for them, and I have a large enough family of my own.’

And so decidedly did he speak, so closely did he watch her, that it was very little help she could give them. Once, when Jane had a great press of work, she had condescended to engage Nelly for a few days to do the easier parts; and Nelly, clever and observing, had so far profited by the insight thus obtained into the mysteries of dressmaking, as to fit herself for making up the Sunday frocks of some of her neighbours’ children, and so earning a few shillings.

The neighbours all liked her, and were sorry for the poor helpless widow and her children; but they were very poor, and had too hard a struggle to keep themselves in life, to be able to help others. And so, during these long summer months, they had often, often known what extreme hunger meant, and had scarcely ever lain down at night, with the certainty of any provision for the morrow.

But even the hunger and the cold, the uncertainty and fears of the future, were not Nelly’s sorest trouble. Her mother’s spirits had revived very much upon their first arrival in Edinburgh, and for a week or two she seemed almost cheerful again. But as difficulties began to press upon her, her spirits soon failed, and her fits

of silent gloom were only interrupted by fits of unreasonable, fretful complaining. At such times she would reproach Nelly as the cause of all their sorrows, first in quarrelling with the priest, and then in persuading them to leave their old friends and come among such a heartless set of people; and forgetting how large a share of their sorrows poor Nelly took upon herself, she would weep and complain for hours together, as if she were the only sufferer.

Nelly bore it all meekly and humbly, but she felt it deeply, and pined for the peace and affection of her old home far more than for its comfort and plenty. The boys were another cause of grief; she had been unable to send them to school, and playing all day with rude, idle boys in the streets, they became rude and rebellious. Sam, in particular, openly and decidedly resisted all her gentle attempts to influence him, and seemed to have lost every good and kind feeling—to care only how best to help and please himself.

Little Betsy was as patient, as contented as ever; but she and Alley, her darling Alley, were day by day growing thinner and paler, and often she feared that a few more days of privation might end in the death of one or both.

Still her courage did not fail, still she held fast her trust and confidence in the goodness and care of her heavenly Father; and as she went about her little household labours, or sat up late in the night trying to patch up their old worn-out clothes, or carried Alley many a weary step out to the hill-side, hoping that the fresh air might brighten his heavy eyes, or bring a

colour into his pale cheeks, still were her thoughts often turned to the Shepherd who had promised to lead and to care for her, still was she strengthened and comforted by the precious promises of His own holy book, still was she able to rest in the sense of His continual presence and blessing.

About the end of October she was rejoiced by an order from a lady to make a dozen of night-gowns. There was a great deal of work about them, a number of frills, and a great deal of fine stitching. But Nelly did not care for the labour or trouble. Night and day she worked at them, carefully, faithfully, making every stitch as neat and as fine as she could, and upheld under the fatigue by the hopes of payment. At last they were finished, and with a joyful heart she took them home, promising the children to bring back a good dinner for once.

She was kept long waiting in the lobby. Then a lady's maid came to tell her that the work was very good, and her mistress was well pleased. But the money? Nelly hesitated, blushed, and in a faltering voice asked if she could be paid. Not to-day, her mistress was too busy, the woman said; she might call in a day or two.

Poor Nelly: And they had not a single penny in the house, nor a morsel of food. A small shawl she wore over her poor, thin, tattered frock was sold for a few pence, and gave them a scanty meal for that day. Another call on the morrow, another order to call again, another return home without food or money. How sore was her heart as she caught Betsy's wistful look when she opened the door, and heard Alley's weak, wailing cry, 'so hungry, so cold.' She took him in her arms,

and tried to soothe and amuse him, while her own tears were falling fast, and while she listened silently and patiently to her mother's unreasonable complaints. It was one of her talking days, and she went on proving to her own perfect satisfaction that it was all Nelly's fault that they had not got the money, and that she had done it on purpose to tease them.

Then Sam and Bob came in; and the former, fierce from hunger, struck poor little Alley for crying, and told Nelly that if she could not give him food, he must go and steal it—he could not starve.

‘Not that, oh, not that,’ she cried in agony; ‘only wait till I come back: *I will* get something;’ and putting down the child, scarcely hearing his cries and sobs, she hurried out, she knew not whither.

‘O Lord, do Thou help us, for none other will!’ she cried again and again, as she ran up the street.

But where to go? What to do? Their aunt was the only person from whom they could ask help, and she was very unwilling to apply to her. She had long ere this found out that the husband looked upon them with an unfriendly and suspicious eye; and the feeling, half pride, half delicacy, of which Highlanders have so much, had made her visits to her aunt very few. Mrs Brown, one of those easy-tempered people who take trouble and sorrow of all kinds very quietly, whether it be their own or other people's, had lately gone seldom to see her niece, because she disliked to see suffering she could not relieve; so that she did not know to what straits they were reduced, or she might, in spite of her husband, have done something for them.

It did not take Nelly long to get to the door of the shop, but it was long before she could make up her mind to go in. But it must be done; Sam must be saved from sin; and with another earnest prayer she timidly opened the door.

Her aunt was from home. The only person in the shop was Sally, the second daughter, an exaggerated likeness of her father, more surly, more miserly. She listened coldly to Nelly's falteringly told tale, at first refused any help, and then, with the most ungracious, grudging manner, gave her a sixpence.

It gave Nelly bitter pain to take it so offered, but yet she did not forget to thank the Lord who had sent them even this small sum. She bought a loaf of bread, and took it home, to have her heart sickened by seeing how the elder boys tore it from her, and seemed to grudge the small proportion she with difficulty succeeded in keeping for the little ones. And they used so to love Alley, and to make such a pet of him. Oh, how hunger had changed them! And saddened to the very heart, almost despairing, she again went out; and without knowing why or how, she found herself wandering up her favourite walk at the foot of the hill. That hill seemed more like a friend, more like the dear old home, than her fretful, unsympathizing mother, or her unkind, fierce brothers; and she threw herself down upon her face on the grass, as if here at least she might find rest, kindness, and pity. She did not now find relief in tears, as she had done in her solitary walk home that sad day at Glenshia, when the first blight fell upon all her hopes. But she lay in a sort of

miserable dream, scarcely knowing what thoughts were passing through her mind, only conscious of a feeling of utter misery. Now, as then, however, the first thing that comforted her was the remembrance that there was a God full of love and tenderness ever near her, who saw all her sorrow, and felt for her in every difficulty. Now, as then, the words, 'Thou, Lord, seest me,' seemed to give her new life. And now, as then, an earnest cry to that God for help comforted and strengthened her; and she rose up to return home with a new courage to bear and to labour.

She was surprised, as she turned to go home, to see Sam coming slowly towards her. Poor boy! his heart was not quite so hard as it seemed. As soon as his hunger was a little satisfied, he began to feel ashamed and sorry for his unkindness to Nelly. He saw that she did not keep even a morsel of the bread for her own eating; he observed the wild look of misery in her face as she left the house; and he soon followed her, anxious to make up to her for his unkindness, though not knowing how. When she threw herself upon the grass, he hung back a little, he did not know what to say. He thought she was crying, and he did not like to see her cry. But now, when she turned towards him a calm, peaceful face, he took courage and went up to her.

'I say, Nelly,' he began rather gruffly, for his pride made him try to cover his shame and sorrow, 'there is no use going on this way. I am going to begin to-morrow, and I'll go to every shopkeeper in Edinburgh, till I find some one who will give me work. I'm a big

boy, and should be doing something for mother and the rest.'

Nelly's heart swelled with gratitude to God, who seemed thus to have already heard her prayer; and quite forgetting all Sam's hard speeches, she entered kindly and readily into his plans, talking to him all the way home in such a pleasant, cheerful way, showing such a confidence in his wish to serve her, such a belief in his affection, as had more effect in softening his heart, than the longest lecture or the most eloquent appeals could have had.

On the following morning Nelly felt weak and ill; and well she might, for she had tasted no food the day before; neither had her mother, and she was this day too weak to leave her bed. The fretfulness had passed, she was now sunk in one of her fits of black despondency. Sam, with Bob, set off early on their work-hunting expedition; and Nelly, persuading the two little ones to lie still in bed to keep themselves warm, went out once more to seek the money owing her. Alley looked ill, very ill indeed, and weak. A terrible fear took hold of Nelly's mind, that both he and her mother were dying of hunger, and she could not help them.

This day she rung the front door bell instead of going to the low door, because she had sometimes thought that the footman looked more compassionate than the female servants whom she saw down stairs. And he did seem to pity the cold, pale-faced girl who stood shivering in her poor thin clothes while she gave her message. But he said his mistress was engaged

with company, and, he was sure, could not now attend to her. Necessity made Nelly bold.

‘If you would tell her, please sir, that we have no money to buy bread, that mother and wee Alley are very ill. If she could only pay me part to-day.’

The good-natured footman could not resist those pleading, trembling tones, and asked her name, that he might tell his mistress.

During this conversation, a young lady was standing at the foot of the stairs leading to the drawing-room, apparently waiting for some one. She had not taken any notice of what was passing until Nelly told her name; but then she started, looked at her earnestly, made a step forward, and seemed about to speak. Just then, a door near her was opened hastily, and she was called by name.

‘Coming,’ she said, still looking at Nelly, and hesitating; but another more impatient call made her turn away, and go into the room.

Nelly saw nothing of this. Her whole thoughts were with her messenger. He returned presently, and even before he spoke his face told his want of success. Mrs Kerr was busy, he said, and would not even hear what he had to say, but had bid him tell Nelly to call in the beginning of the week. Nelly made no complaint, but thanking him for his kindness, she turned meekly and sadly away.

In coming here, hope and expectation prevented her from feeling how weak and ill she was. But now that was all gone, she felt scarcely able to stand or walk. She went on a little way, and then became so sick and

giddy, that she was forced to sit down upon the steps of a door. She covered her eyes with her hands, that she might not see how the ground was moving up and down under her feet, and how the trees and railings on the opposite side of the street were dancing round. She sat thus for some minutes, when two ladies came up: one was Miss Kerr, whose house she had just left; the other was the lady who had been waiting in the lobby. The latter was talking; but when she saw Nelly, she stopped abruptly, and again looked earnestly at her. She went on a little further, then stopped; and hastily telling her companion she thought she knew something about that girl, she went back and touched Nelly gently on the shoulder.

Nelly started, and looked up frightened and bewildered.

‘I heard you say your name was Nelly M’Lean,’ said the young lady, ‘and I wished to ask if you come from Glenshia.’

A flush of pleasure lighted up her heavy eyes as Nelly answered that she did, and eagerly asked if the lady knew Glenshia.

‘I never was there, but I have heard Miss Helen M’Neil speak of it.’

‘Miss Helen, dear Miss Helen! Do you know Miss Helen?’ And Nelly rose and tried to stand, as if all respect *must* be paid to one who was a friend of Miss Helen’s.

‘She wrote to me about you,’ said the young lady, blushing and hesitating, ‘and I meant to call and see you; but I—I—in short,’ she added frankly, ‘I put it

off at first, and then I forgot—I am so sorry; I am afraid you are not well;’ and she looked pityingly at the poor, trembling, pale girl, so ill clad for such a cold day.

‘No,’ was the simple answer. ‘We have no money and no food, and mother and wee Alley are dying.’ And again she covered her face with her hands, and leaned against the railings for support.

Miss Grainger—for that was the lady’s name—looked greatly shocked. Miss Kerr had now joined her, and impatiently begged her to come on.

‘But this poor girl! See, she is ill and faint with hunger.’

‘Well, well, give her something to buy food with and come away. Look how people are staring. We shall have a crowd round us presently, and I am sure you should not like that!’

No, Miss Grainger felt she should not. She took out half-a-crown, and gave it to Nelly.

‘You must take that, and get some food for yourself and your mother,’ she said very kindly; ‘and tell me where you live, that I may call upon you to-morrow.’

Nelly thanked her with tears of gratitude, and gave her address.

‘At the back of the Pleasance,’ repeated Miss Grainger, ‘and this is Heriot Row. My poor girl, you can never walk so far, and you so faint and ill.’

O yes, Nelly felt she could go any length, now that she had something to take home to dear wee Alley. But Miss Grainger was not satisfied.

‘Stay,’ she said, after a moment’s thought, ‘there is a baker’s shop just round the corner. I know the wife

well; she is a good, kind woman; I will run down and speak to her. Do you go there first, and she will give you something to strengthen you before you set off on such a long walk.'

And she ran off immediately, followed more slowly by her companion, who grumbled a good deal at the delay. Mrs Campbell, the baker's wife, was, as Miss Grainger had said, a good, kind woman. She was herself a Highlander, and had a warm heart for all who came from her dear, old hill-country. She was a mother, and could feel for the little boy at home dying of cold and hunger, so that altogether Miss Grainger could not have applied to a better person. She received Nelly with all the hearty kindness of an old friend, took her into the back room, where a cheery fire was burning, made her sit in her own arm-chair, and set before her a plentiful meal of cold meat and bread.

When she heard from Nelly more particulars of her story, her interest was increased. She filled a basket with cold meat and rolls, upon the pretext that the sick child might perhaps fancy them more than plain bread; and she put up a small parcel of tea and sugar for Mrs M'Lean, saying that, when she was ill herself, she liked nothing better than a cup of tea. And she did all in such a kind, friendly way, that Nelly forgot she was a stranger, and felt little shame or awkwardness in accepting her gifts.

It was a pretty heavy basket, for Mrs Campbell had taken care to send what would satisfy more than the invalids; but Nelly, strengthened and revived by her hearty meal, by the kindness and sympathy shown to

her, and by the thoughts of the pleasure her return thus laden would bring to her home, did not feel its weight. She could afford to buy a small quantity of coals, and some potatoes; and heartily did she rejoice to be able to set a large dish of smoking potatoes before the boys, when they came home very cold and hungry from their fruitless search after work.

In the meantime, Miss Grainger's heart was full of remorse for her forgetfulness about the poor widow and orphans, and full of plans for their comfort. As soon as she could, she left her companion, who seemed to take little interest in the affair, and returned home, impatient to see her father, and to interest him in her new *protégés*. She had no mother nor sister to share her feelings, and she was at first cast down and chilled by the coldness with which Mr Grainger heard her story.

'And what can you do for them, now you have found them?' he asked. 'You have already so many dependents upon your bounty.'

She did not know exactly, but *something* must be done. They could not be left to starve.

'It is easy to say something must be done, but I ask you what you can do?' he repeated, in the same matter-of-fact tone. 'You cannot make work for them, neither can you afford to keep the whole family in idleness.'

It was all true, she could not deny it; but it was provoking to be met with such objections at the very outset, and she left her father, half-thinking that he was cold-hearted and un pitying. This was not the case, however; he only wished to make his eager, impetuous

daughter consider a little more before she acted. And although he took a disagreeable, and rather injudicious, way of doing so, yet it produced the effect. Before she again spoke to him on the subject, she had well and carefully considered the whole matter, and laid her plans with prudence as well as generosity.

Her father had promised to give her a set of lessons from a celebrated teacher of water-colour drawing ; and this pleasure she was willing to give up, if he would allow her to spend the money so saved upon her poor family. Gladly, approvingly did he give his consent, only advising her to be cautious and prudent in spending it, and rather to seek to put it in their power to maintain themselves, than to give them the money in charity; and promising, that if any way of helping them effectually and permanently could be found, that he would give his assistance to it.

Miss Grainger's first and pleasant task was to order in such things as the family stood most immediately in want of,—coals, meal, potatoes, warm clothing, and so on ; and then she made a round of calls upon all the friends she thought most likely to help her with advice, with money, or with employment. In these visits she met with much to disappoint and chill her warm, eager feelings ; but she persevered, and was at last rewarded with complete success.

The last person to whom she applied was a lady who was well known for her benevolence, and for singular good sense in the choice of the objects of her charity, and in her mode of dispensing it. Miss Grainger had been thus late in applying to her, because she

knew that she had already so many to care and provide for.

But Mrs Stuart's zeal and benevolence were untiring. She listened to Miss Grainger's story with the warmest interest, entered with ready zeal into all her plans, and, after questioning her carefully about the particulars of their history and character, said she believed she could at once place them in a situation where they might be very comfortable, and might support themselves by their own exertions.

Her husband had been looking out for some one to live at the lodge of their country seat,—some one who would keep the place neat, and who could be trusted with messages and parcels which were often left there during their absence in Edinburgh; and she believed the M'Leans would suit them exactly. They should thus have a house rent free, with a good garden which would supply them with food all the summer at least. A small sum would be paid them weekly for the trouble of opening the gate, and Nelly might increase this sum if she could engage to assist their old dairy-maid in looking after the poultry, or Nelly might even go to a place if her mother were to recover.

Miss Grainger shook her head at this suggestion. Their own medical man had seen Mrs M'Lean, had pronounced that her nerves had received some sudden and terrible shock, and he doubted if her mind could ever recover its powers. All that could be done for her was to give her plenty of nourishing food, and to keep her mind free from anxiety and care.

'An advice,' added Miss Grainger, 'which poor Nelly

heard with a little patient sigh and a look of hopelessness, but which she will now feel gratefully she can comply with. Oh, Mrs Stuart, how happy you have made me! How happy my poor Nelly will be to hear such good news!’

And so indeed she was; so happy, she could scarcely understand or believe in her own good fortune. To go away from the dull, dark town into the free country, to be sure of having a comfortable home, and sufficient food for all these dear ones. Had any one ever had such friends as she had?

All arrangements were soon made. Mrs Stuart wished them to take possession immediately. Their house in Edinburgh having been taken for only six months, Miss Grainger paid the rent for them, and relieved Nelly’s mind by promising to allow her to pay it back when she could. Mrs Stuart took all the expenses of removal upon herself, and supplied them with such furniture as was absolutely necessary, leaving to Nelly the pleasure of adding to it by her own labours. And in about a fortnight from the time she had first met her good friend, Nelly found herself comfortably established in her new home, her mother looking almost cheerful, and her heart once more gladdened with her darling Alley’s joyous laugh. There was a good school not far off, for the boys and Betsy. And now that Sam and Bob had a garden of their own to work in after school hours, they gradually lost those habits of idleness and mischief which had so greatly distressed poor Nelly. In short, the year closed upon them in possession of as much outward prosperity as their heart could desire.

CHAPTER IV.

Outward Comfort—Inward Conflict.

PUT an emphasis on the words, 'outward prosperity,' because now, when all her worldly concerns were so prosperous, a cloud had come over that rest of heart, that peace of mind, which had sustained Nelly through all her sorrows. In those days of trouble, she had never forgotten to seek the blessing of her God in every labour, to trust to Him in every trial, and to thank Him for every comfort. But now, when all was smiling around her, when peace and happiness, far beyond all she had ever hoped for had been given to her, she had no time to think of, to thank Him who had sent it all. Now, when her heart was full of joy and gratitude to her friends for all their kindness, she forgot that great Friend who, in His love, had put it in the hearts of these earthly ones to pity and help her.

Not that she did not still pray to God morning and evening. But her prayers were formal, heartless words; and she now read with a cold, uninterested heart, that book which had been in her suffering, unfriended days, her meat and drink, her friend, comforter, and guide.

But God, in His goodness, would not leave her in peace in this state of forgetfulness of Him and of His goodness. He provided a means for arousing and alarming her.

The old dairy-maid of whom Mrs Stuart had spoken was a very godly woman, and she soon took a great liking for Nelly. She and her husband, the coachman, lived in the manor-house during the absence of the family in Edinburgh; and as she was always anxious to keep it in good order, she was often glad of Nelly's help in those scrubbings of floors, and scouring of grates, which she thought necessary. The family were coming out for the Christmas holidays, and she asked Nelly to come up for a day or two, to help her in the extra cleaning, which must be gone through, in preparation for this visit.

They had worked hard all day. Jenny had kept Nelly to take supper with her; and after it was over, as they sat talking beside the bright kitchen fire, Nelly had been led on to tell her companion all the particulars of her father's death, of the priest's curse, and of her trials in Edinburgh.

'Well, bairn,' said the good old woman, 'the Lord has been very good to you; see that you are grateful to Him.'

'Grateful, oh, I *must* be! How can I be otherwise?' Nelly was beginning, when suddenly conscience spoke out so loudly, and set her ingratitude before her mind so clearly and distinctly, that the words were choked. A burning blush rose to her cheek; and forgetting Jenny's presence, she covered her face with her hands, bowed her head upon her breast, and groaned aloud.

Jenny looked at her for a few minutes in silence; then rising, she laid her hand on her shoulder, and asked kindly, what was the matter.

‘Ah, Jenny,’ said Nelly, slowly and sadly, ‘in my joy I have forgotten the Lord I sought in my sorrow ; and that is bad, very bad.’

‘Yes, my bairn, it *is* bad. But if the Lord makes this the means of teaching you the wickedness and black ingratitude of your nature, ye may live to bless Him for this bitter grief, for these tears of the heart.’

There was time for no more. The coachman’s step was heard as he came home from his evening visit to his horses ; and Nelly, saying a hasty ‘good night,’ ran away, to avoid speaking to him.

The avenue was long, and Nelly had time for many bitter thoughts during her walk. Yes, she had forgotten God ; and as Jenny said, that was black, oh, how black ingratitude ! But then it was not her nature to be so wicked ; Jenny was wrong there. At one time she had loved God, she had rejoiced in His presence, and given Him thanks for His goodness. And she should do so again. From this time henceforward, never, never would she forget that heavenly Father, who had so remembered and cared for her. But how could she be sure of this ? She had forgotten once ; how did she know that she might not forget again ? To be sure, she *must* love Him, and be grateful so long as she remembered to think of Him and of His love. But how could she be certain that she should thus remember Him ? The Lord Himself must teach her ; and she would pray to Him—oh, how earnestly !—to keep Himself in her mind.

She was glad to find all gone to bed when she reached home. The little kitchen was empty, and she kneeled

down at once to offer up her earnest prayer. But before the words could pass her lips, there came the terrible thought that God was angry with her, and would not now hear her prayers. A voice seemed to sound in her ears, 'Because I called unto them, and they refused; they shall call on Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, and shall not find Me.' And she rose up hastily, and began to walk up and down the room in bitter agony of mind.

God had forsaken her, her Lord had turned away His face from her; and where could she go for help or peace? With His presence and blessing, she had been happy in the midst of outward desolation and trouble; but now that He was gone, what were all her earthly friends to her, what joy could all her outward comforts give her? Her heart was full, was bowed down with misery, and she could see no help, no hope.

I do not know how long she might have gone on walking up and down in the kitchen,—perhaps through the whole night, for she was too miserable to know what she was doing. But her mother awaking, came to see what she was about, and she was obliged to go to bed with her.

When she awoke next morning, a heavy, indistinct feeling of misery seemed to weigh upon her heart; but she tried to shake it off. She was afraid to think, lest she should recall the bitter agony of the preceding night; and instead of seeking to remember and to love God, as she had promised to do, she tried to shut out all thoughts of Him, tried hard to forget that there was a God, who could see her heart. It was a God all love,

all kindness, that she had liked to think of, and to feel near her. Now that He had taught her that He was a God who hated sin, she tried to put Him at a distance, was afraid and unwilling to think of Him.

She was glad that Betsy happened to have a holiday, and went up with her to the house, because her presence would prevent Jenny from alluding to the conversation of the night before, and because, in talking to her in their walk up the avenue, she had no time for disagreeable thoughts.

But God, in His goodness, would not suffer her thus to put away the thought of Him. She had refused to stay to supper, lest Jenny should again begin to speak of the gratitude she owed to God, and of the sinfulness of forgetting Him. She had succeeded through the day in keeping away from the subject, in preventing Jenny from saying anything that could alarm her; but she could not silence the voice of God's Spirit in her heart. And as she again took her solitary way down the long, dark avenue, all the thoughts and fears of the previous night came back with greater force than ever.

'What can I do?' she cried. 'The Lord will not hear me, and there is none other to help.'

She set herself to recollect all that God had ever done for her, and to make herself feel gratitude and love. But her heart seemed hard as stone. Not one feeling of love could she raise, not one tear of sorrow for her own hardness could she shed. All was blank, and dreary, and dead.

Days and weeks passed on in this way, and each one, as it passed, seemed to bring fresh bitterness of misery,

seemed to make her heart harder than before ; and she began to feel that hatred, instead of love, had taken possession of her. Yes, she felt that she hated God, and would have rejoiced to know that there was no God.

She had often before this heard and read that all men were sinners ; but now, for the first time, did she feel in her heart that she in particular was a great sinner, that God looked upon her as a sinner, and that, therefore, His wrath and curse lay upon her. And it was a bitter lesson, and sorely did her heart rebel against learning it.

One faint ray of comfort still remained, in the belief that she had at one time loved God ; but this, too, was to be taken from her. God opened her eyes, and showed her that she had only loved Him for what she could get from Him, only rejoiced in His presence because she fancied He had a peculiar favour for her, and looked upon her as a good and a loving child. Now He showed her how little ground she had had for this fancy. Then, when she had thought herself good, she had been earthly-minded, self-seeking, a sinner in the sight of Him who is all holiness, and whose justice must be satisfied in the punishment of sinners. And now the cloud had settled upon poor Nelly in its deepest blackness ; now was she wholly, utterly miserable. She had for weeks concealed her state of mind from every one ; but now she could no longer bear it, and in a burst of hopeless anguish she told Jenny all she had thought and felt.

‘ Others seem to feel moved with reading the Bible,

or under the preaching of the word,' she said; 'but I feel nothing. When God looks into other hearts, He sees at least sorrow for their coldness, a desire to feel; but there is in my heart nothing but sorrow that there is a God to hate and punish sin,—no desire but the horrible one that I could take Him out of heaven, or take myself for ever out of His sight. I am a miserable sinner, and a sinner without help, and without hope.'

'You never said a truer word than that, Nelly,' was the old woman's solemn answer. 'But there is another as true; and it is this, "Help is laid upon One who is mighty." Nothing can be truer than that in you there is nothing, no *one* thing good or right; but it is as true that "in Him ye may be complete, even in Him who is the head of all principality and power." Ye told your father, Nelly, to look to the Saviour for pardon and help; and God blessed your words, to bring peace to his soul. But ye spoke of that ye knew not of. What is the Saviour to one who is in no danger, and has nothing to be saved from? Bless the Lord, my bairn, oh, bless the Lord, that He has opened your eyes, and made you cry, "Unclean, unclean."'

A glimpse of light, faint and trembling, seemed at these words to shine into Nelly's mind; but she could not at first use it.

'Yes, if I could believe in the Saviour, all would be well; but I cannot, Jenny, I cannot.'

'Bairn, bairn, put *all* your concerns in the blessed Saviour's hands, and let Him manage them for you. He must give you faith, He must teach you what to

believe, and He must *make* you do it. Put yourself, dead, and cold, and helpless in His hands, and "He will perfect that which concerneth you," and in Him you shall be safe. All things are His,—faith, love, every grace; and He will give them to you as ye need them, for He ever liveth to know *all* your need, and to supply it out of the riches of His grace.'

Nelly had comforted her father on his death-bed, by reminding him that Christ was a living Saviour; and now that same precious truth was the means of bringing peace to her own soul. She was, by God's grace, enabled to rest her soul on Christ, seeing Him as a living Prophet to teach her, a living Priest to intercede for her, and a living King to rule over her, to subdue all those evil lusts and passions of her heart, which were both His and her enemies. When she had spoken to her father of the lamb lying helpless in the shepherd's arms, it had been a pleasant, lovely image to her mind. But it was now a real, living truth in her heart, bringing peace and quietness to her soul; and, in Jenny's words, she could now trust her Saviour to manage *all* her concerns for her, because she knew that He was ever living to see and to supply every want as it arose.

'It would have been of no use,' she said to Jenny, a few days after their first conversation, when she was describing the change in her feelings that conversation had produced; 'it would have been of no use to have given me promises, however precious, because there was a dark, thick wall before my heart, which would have turned them all off, when they would have come

in. But the Saviour, as a real, living person, knew how to take down that wall, stone by stone, and to make a door for Himself; and with Himself, He brought light and truth, life and peace, into my poor, dark, lifeless heart.'

'That which I know not, teach Thou me,' was now her constant prayer; and she was willing to be shown more and more of her own exceeding sinfulness, so only that Christ might be made more precious. She was willing to feel more deeply her own utter helplessness, so only that she might be driven to rest more entirely on Him who was all her salvation and all her strength. The holiness, the justice, the truth of God, were no longer terrible to her, because she had laid the burden of her sins upon Christ, and now saw these attributes engaged on her side, and pledges of the continual love and favour of God in Christ. She saw now how mistaken she had been, in thinking that her former sense of God's loving-kindness and tender mercy was a sign of a renewed nature; but she blessed God for having even then given her these views of His goodness, to comfort her in sorrow, and to keep her from despair and murmuring. And she knew well, that however she might have been mistaken about her love to Him, she could never have thought too much of His tenderness, of His watchfulness, and goodness.

One great change she now found in herself, lay in her feelings towards her mother, her brothers, and sister. She had always loved them, always been most anxious for their comfort here, and for their eternal happiness hereafter. But now a new and powerful wish

was awakened in her heart for them, that the blessed Saviour might get a harvest of faith and love from the hearts of those she so dearly loved. Even could she have been sure of their eternal safety, this would not now have contented her, unless she could also see them one and all glorifying and serving God at the present time.

Mrs M'Lean had constantly avoided the subject of religion since her husband's death. She could not recollect the priest's visit without horror, and to avoid the subject altogether seemed the best way of banishing from her mind the terrible images he had conjured up. She had refused to go to the Protestant church with Nelly, although she never proposed to go to the Catholic chapel. Nelly had often wished to give her mother the comforts she herself felt, and had often tried to talk to her of her father's hope and confidence, had often tried to make her see God's goodness and love as she saw them. But now her efforts were far more unwearied, far more earnest; and while she spoke of the love of Christ with tears of joy, she also laboured to alarm and rouse her mother to a sense of her own alienation from God. Comfort was not now the first object of her wishes, either for herself or for others. Holiness of heart and life was that which she most earnestly strove after and prayed for.

With tender affection she watched for opportunities for introducing the subject, for the best modes of interesting her mother, and attracting her attention; and constantly did she endeavour to show the good fruits of the religion she professed in her increasing dutiful-

ness, in her unvarying unselfishness. And her loving labours were in the end successful. Gradually Mrs M'Lean began to listen, at first for her daughter's sake. Then, as her mind became stronger and more cheerful, she began to take an ever-growing interest in these matters, for their own sake; and at last she became a sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus, and, with her daughter, often blessed the Lord for all the way by which He had led them,—blessed Him for sorrow and pain, as well as for peace and comfort.

As Nelly's views became clearer, she grew very anxious to let her darling Miss Helen know of the change that had taken place in her heart. She could understand Miss M'Neil's often expressed anxiety about the state of her soul; and she was most anxious to satisfy her. But Nelly could not write, and had therefore no way of communicating with her friend. Miss Grainger had promised to tell her of the favourable change in the M'Leans' worldly prospects; but Nelly knew that the news of the spiritual change would be more precious still, and she could not rest till she had made her acquainted with it. The gardener's children were at the same school as the M'Leans, and one of the girls was learning to write. Nelly borrowed an old copy-book from her, and sat up for an hour or two every night to teach herself to write; and after long and patient labour she succeeded, and you can yourselves imagine with what joyful, grateful feelings her letter was received.

And now I must conclude. Nelly still lives with her

mother, Betsy, and Alley, at their comfortable home ; and by her consistent Christian character, by her loving spirit, she is a blessing to all around. The steady trust in God which supported her, even when He was to her an unknown God, still remains to comfort her in every sorrow, to deepen every joy. Betsy is growing up, a sweet-tempered, gentle girl, very like Nelly's own self. Sam and Bob are both settled in life,—one a smith, the other a carpenter,—well-behaved, respectable young men. And Alley, no longer wee Alley, is still the pride and darling of all. The schoolmaster says he is a genius, and the fond mother and sister believe him, and gladly listen to his proposal, that Alley should go on with his studies longer than most boys in his situation do, with the view of qualifying himself for being first his assistant, and finally his successor.

My dear little readers, I should like you each to ask yourselves solemnly the question, 'Am I really a child of God?' Little Nelly thought she could safely say that she was so. She thought that she loved God as her Father ; and while tried with many sorrows and anxieties, her only comfort lay in the thought that God was taking care of and loving her. But when her mind was aroused to see the wickedness and ungodliness of her own heart, all these bright hopes and comforts at once fled away ; and she saw that she had never had any ground to think that God could look upon her otherwise than with holy indignation as a rebel against His government.


Now I wish each one of you, while you read her

story, to pause and consider whether you have as good grounds as she had to think yourself a beloved child of God. And I pray God, that He may give you His Holy Spirit, to teach you the truth, and to lead you to that living Saviour, in whom alone God can be well pleased with any of us.



THE GARDEN: AN ALLEGORY.



H, mamma, I am so hot and tired,' cried little Henry Danvers, coming into his mamma's drawing-room, and throwing himself on the ground at her feet; 'I have been working all this time in the bright sunshine; and now I am so hot and tired, I don't know what to do.'

'Better sit still a little to rest, don't you think?' answered Mrs Danvers, with a pleasant smile.

'Yes, but then I have nothing to do while I am resting,' he said discontentedly. 'I am too tired to draw, or to mend my whip, and I have no nice book.'

Mrs Danvers considered for a minute, and then said, 'Do you think this would be a good time for us to look at the large picture?'

'At the new picture papa sent from London, mamma?' exclaimed Henry, springing up, with a face full of animation and delight, and from which every trace of vexation and fatigue had disappeared. 'Oh yes, mamma, do let me fetch it.'

'I am not quite sure, Henry,' said his mamma, smiling; 'papa bid us wait for an opportunity, when you might be well disposed to think seriously about it. Now, when a little boy is in a discontented temper, he is sel-

dom inclined to think about anything, except his own grievances.'

'But, mamma, I shall be quite contented if you will let me look at it. You know I can have no grievances to think about, if you give me such a pleasant occupation.'

'And you think that we are not bound to be contented, unless we have everything we wish for?' asked Mrs Danvers, archly.

But her question was unheeded by the eager boy.

'I may fetch it, mamma, mayn't I? I know where it is, on the lowest shelf of the bookcase. And see, the door is open, so I can get it nicely without troubling you.'

This was evidently no fit time for a lecture upon contentment, and Mrs Danvers gave the desired permission.

'What a great big picture it is, mamma! and how nicely it is rolled up round this roller.'

'Don't untie it, dear. Bring it as it is,' said his mamma, rising to clear away some of the books on the round table, so as to leave room for the large print.

'Upon the ottoman, mamma,' cried Henry, 'and then I can see it from my little stool, and you can look down upon it so comfortably from your own chair; and I can place your work-box here, upon the end of the ottoman, so conveniently beside you. That will be quite a comfortable plan. Won't it, mamma?'

And while his mamma was unfastening the string and unrolling the picture, he bustled about fetching his own stool, drawing in Mrs Danvers' chair, and arrang-

ing everything so comfortably, as he said. At last all was done, and he could sit down and feast his eyes upon the beautiful picture that was spread before him.

It was the representation of a beautiful garden, in which there seemed to be everything to excite pleasure or admiration. Soft velvet grass, beautiful flowers, luxuriant fruit-trees laden with smiling fruit, and large evergreens, whose sombre colour and somewhat formal outline contrasted pleasantly with the lively green, and graceful, drooping forms of the birch, laburnum, and acacia. There was a bright blue sky overhead, with small silver clouds; and so beautifully and naturally was the picture drawn, that Henry half fancied he could smell the rich clusters of roses, could feel the light breezes that played among the leaves, or could hear the song of the birds, and the hum of insects, as they flitted joyously from flower to flower.

Henry was delighted, and amused himself for some time in pointing out to his mamma, now this gay plot of flowers, now that beautiful apple-tree, this cool shady walk, or that sunny bank of bright green grass. At last he said suddenly—

‘But, mamma, I don’t understand what papa meant by thinking about the picture; what am I to think about?’

‘About the story connected with it,’ said Mrs Danvers.

‘So there is a story about it! And you know it, mamma,’ he cried, joyfully. ‘Oh, that is all that it wants to make it quite perfect; so please, mamma, to tell it to me. I suppose it is about these little boys,

who are working in these gardens, and playing about on the grass. They seem to have got little gardens of their own, just as I have.'

'Yes, it is about these boys. They all live in that beautiful garden. They remain there, some for a shorter, some for a longer time, according to the pleasure of their Father, who has placed them in it. At a certain time, He will send a messenger, first to one, then to another; and whenever the messenger comes to any boy, he must immediately obey the summons, and go away.'

'Where to, mamma? Where do they go?'

Mrs Danvers made Henry observe that the garden was surrounded on all sides by a very thick wood; and in one side of the garden wall she showed him a door, by which, she said, the messenger led the boys into the wood. The door stood a little open, so that Henry could see that this wood was very dark and gloomy, and it seemed as if the light of day never shone in it.

'I should not like to leave this bright, sunny garden, mamma,' he said, 'to go into that dark wood. Does the boy's Father live there?'

'No, my child,' Mrs Danvers answered, seriously. 'He lives in a palace, so beautiful, so glorious, so full of every pleasure that the heart can imagine, that this garden, which you so much admire, looks dark and dull in comparison. But every boy must pass through this dark wood before he can reach his Father's palace.'

'Oh, but if they have only to pass through it in order

to get to their beautiful home, they won't care for its darkness.'

'Perhaps they might not, if they were *sure* of going to their Father's house. But that is not the case.

'When their Father placed them in this garden, He gave each a little garden to dress, and take care of. Not merely for amusement, as your garden is, but as a duty which He positively commanded them to perform. He gave them, at the same time, a book, containing plain and particular directions as to how they were to manage these gardens, and what plants He desired them to cultivate.

'Each boy, after he has passed through the dark wood, will be brought into the presence of his Father. This book of directions will be opened, and along with it, another containing a full and correct account of the state of his garden. If it be found, upon comparing these, that he has obeyed his Father's directions, his Father will acknowledge him as His son, and will receive him into his House, to dwell there for ever. There he shall for ever rejoice in his Father's presence and love. There his occupations shall all be exactly what he shall most delight in. There he shall be ever learning new lessons about his Father's glory and goodness. There not one single thing shall be wanting which can add to his happiness; not one single thing shall ever happen to vex or grieve him.

'But if, on the other hand, it be found that he has disobeyed his Father's commands, that he has preferred his own amusement and pleasure to the performance of the duty that his Father laid upon him, that he has

forgotten to consult the book of directions, or has wilfully chosen to cultivate plants which it forbids, or to neglect those which it recommends, then he shall be cast into a fearful, gloomy prison-house, where he shall dwell for ever in terrible pain and misery. There he shall never know one moment of happiness, and there not one single thing shall be wanting which can add to his misery and despair.'

'Oh, but, mamma,' cried Henry eagerly, 'you know they would be so careful to obey the directions, and not to be sent to that prison-house. And then it is pleasant to work in a garden. It was not as if their Father had given them a very hard, disagreeable task.'

'It might not be so easy as you imagine to do all that was required, dear Henry,' said Mrs Danvers, gravely. 'Every plant must be found in a perfect state of health and beauty; and not one single weed, however small, must be seen.'

'*Every plant perfect, not one weed,*' repeated the little boy, thoughtfully. 'Oh, mamma, that would not be easy. You know one cannot work in all parts of the garden at once; and perhaps, when one was busy at one place, weeds might be growing up or something happening to injure the plants in other parts. Only, if they knew exactly when the messenger would come, they might, by being very industrious and careful, have it all right just for once.'

'No one can know that, my dear boy. Sometimes he will come in a moment to the very boy who least expects him; and then, whatever be the state of his garden, he must go away at once. At other times, where he sends

a warning that he will come soon, the boy perhaps gets frightened, and cannot work properly, or he has lost his book of directions, or his tools, or he has not time or fit opportunity to repair the mischief his former carelessness has caused.

‘And, besides, their Father keeps His eye always upon their gardens, marking down in His book every little circumstance that happens; and if but *one* weed have been suffered to grow, but for one hour, then the boy must lose his place in his Father’s house, and be cast down into the fearful prison-house. In addition to all this, I must tell you that the soil of these gardens is naturally hard and barren; and while the most hateful weeds grow there readily and luxuriantly, there is not a single good plant natural to the soil.’

‘Oh, mamma, then they must all be lost; not one of them can ever go to the beautiful palace. Is there no way to save any of them?’ asked Henry, earnestly.

Mrs Danvers laid her hand gently upon his shoulder, and looking seriously into his face, she asked him if he could not answer that question himself,—if he did not know what the story meant.

Henry considered for a minute or two, and then said in a low, solemn tone, ‘It is an allegory, mamma, is it not? The Father means God.’

‘Yes, Henry. And the garden?’

‘This world, mamma. But the boys’ gardens I don’t quite understand.’

‘They mean our own hearts, dear Henry, in which God has commanded us to cultivate those graces that are pleasing to Him, and to check those evil feelings that

are hateful to Him. You have read the text, "Their soul shall be as a watered garden."

'And now, Henry, can you answer your own question. Do you know of any way by which poor sinners can be saved, even although they have neglected and disobeyed their Father's commandments?'

'Yes, mamma,' he said, gravely, 'because Christ has suffered the punishment that we have deserved; and if we believe on Him, He will save us, and God will not look at our sins, but only at His holiness. But please, mamma, tell it all on in the allegory, as if I did not know it; and tell me about these boys too, mamma. Here is one with such a pretty garden, surely he has done right, surely he has allowed no weeds to grow.'

'No weeds, Henry! Could mine be a true allegory if that were the case? Is there any man upon earth who has done quite right, who has never done wrong?'

'No, mamma, you have taught me that the Bible says, "There is none righteous, no, not one."'

'Yes, Henry, and the Bible is God's own book, and every word of it must be true.'

'The Bible is the Book of directions, is it not, mamma? Please go on, and tell me all about this little boy with the pretty garden. What is his name? Did he take care to read the Book, and to follow its directions?'

'His name is Felix. He did not always remember to take care of his garden, or to obey the directions of the Book. At one time he was a giddy, light-hearted little fellow, not caring much about anything, except his own pleasure and amusement. He spent the whole

day in playing with his companions, in strolling through the pleasant walks, or in lying on the soft velvet grass; enjoying the bright sunshine, the beautiful flowers and fruits, the sweet song of the birds, the gay hum of the insects as they fluttered past him, without one thought of the duty which he owed to the kind Father who had given him so many pleasures.

‘He read in the Book every morning and evening, because he had got into the habit of doing so; but he never felt any earnest desire to learn from it what his Father wished him to do. In general, his eye ran over the words without any attention to the meaning; or if he were sometimes amused and pleased with the many interesting stories which it contained, he yet never thought of asking how they applied to him, or what lessons they were intended to teach him. The glowing descriptions which it gave of the love and goodness of the Father, and of the glories and pleasures of His house, sometimes attracted his attention, and made him think that it might be pleasant to go and live there some time or other, when he was quite tired of the garden and of its pleasures. But he never considered that he had no right to expect that his Father would admit him into His house afterwards, if he did not choose to obey Him while he was in the garden.’

‘And about the prison-house, mamma? Did he never read about the prison-house?’

‘Yes, and sometimes he was startled and alarmed by what he read, and by the thought that his garden was not in good order; and then he would resolve to be very careful and diligent for the future. But these fears

were soon quieted. He soon began to persuade himself, that, after all, his garden was as well as those of his neighbours, nay, perhaps much better ; that some of the required plants were there, and that on their account his Father would forgive the absence of others.'

'He had some good plants then, mamma?'

'Yes, some such plants as "Affection," "Kindness," "Contentment," and "Desire to oblige others," but they had not the proper kind of root. For you must know that in these gardens the roots had a different name from the plants themselves, and sometimes several different plants sprung from the same root. These flowers in Felix's garden were fair and pleasant to look upon, but their root was "Natural Affection;" and in order to please the Father, they ought to have sprung from a root called "Desire to do His will."

'Such as they were, however, Felix was quite satisfied with them, and felt quite sure of being admitted into his Father's house. And so a whole new race of weeds sprung up in his garden, called "Conceit," "Presumption," "Carelessness," "Security," and their root was "Trusting in self."

'One day, while Felix was, as usual, amusing himself with his companions, a tall, powerful, gloomy-looking man, suddenly appeared by his side. His name was "Sickness." He laid his hand upon Felix, and said, "You must not play any more, you must stay with me." And his hand pressed so heavily, that Felix could not resist him, but was forced to give up his walks and games, and remain still by his side.

'At first he was not much concerned at this, for his

young companions came beside him, and brought him flowers and fruits, and told him stories to amuse him. Besides, Felix really had a good deal of "Contentment" growing in his garden, and that makes a boy tolerably happy in almost any situation. So some days passed very quietly; Felix amused himself as he best could, and was quite unconscious that "Sickness," with his strong hand, was gradually drawing him nearer and nearer to the door leading into the dark wood. At last, one day he happened to turn his head in that direction, and was quite alarmed to see how near it was. He looked away from it immediately, tried to persuade himself that he was not nearer than he had often before been, and resolved to amuse himself, and not to look round again. But his alarm had been too lively to permit him to keep his resolution. It was in vain that he tried to think of something else, tried to forget all about it: whichever way he looked, the open door, the dark, fearful wood, seemed to be before him; and when he again glanced fearfully round, he could no longer deceive himself,—he certainly was much nearer. He struggled to throw off the strong hand which held him; but, alas! all his efforts could not loosen its grasp in the least. Closer and closer it drew him to the door, which seemed to open wide to admit him.

'Poor Felix was in despair. He now remembered all that the Book had told him about the judgment-seat, and about the prison-house. When he looked at his garden, the weeds seemed now more numerous, more luxuriant, than those in any other garden. Those plants which he had been so fond of looking at, and to

which he had trusted for a right to be admitted into the palace, seemed to have faded away, or were quite choked up by some new weeds, such as "Despair," "Hatred of the Father's holiness," and others like them; while, at the same time, the strong hand of sickness prevented him from even attempting to make his garden better.

'He could only be still, and look through the door into the dark wood, and imagine that he saw his Father's eyes bent upon him with a look of terrible displeasure, and that he already heard the awful words pronounced, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."'

'Oh, mamma, and did he go through the door?'

'No, my love, his Father had pity upon him, and determined to give him another opportunity of doing right; and He commanded sickness to loosen his grasp, and to set him free. And sickness obeyed the command. Gradually the iron hand pressed less and less heavily. At last it was removed altogether; Felix was once more at liberty.'

'Oh, mamma, how happy he would be when he felt that the strong hand was gone, and that he could go away from the door, and work in his garden, or play with his companions!'

'It was a great relief; but yet Felix could scarcely be called happy. He could not forget the terrible alarm he had felt; he could not forget that, although he had been suffered to escape for this time, yet a day *must* come when he *must* pass through the door, *must* stand

before the judgment-seat, and *must* hear the terrible sentence pronounced. And all he now cared for, the only thing he was now anxious about, was to put his garden in right order, to root out the hateful weeds, and to plant the right plants.

‘ But this was not easy. The very sight of his garden was enough to drive him to despair. Everywhere nothing but weeds met his eye. Here was a corner crowded with rank nettles; there, another filled with the broad-leaved dock, with its strong, deep-spreading root. On one side, tall thistles, which seemed to lift up their heads in proud contempt of his efforts to extirpate them; on another, brambles and briars, which tore his hands and clothes when he tried to touch them; and everywhere, low creeping weeds of every various kind, which, with their long-rooted tendrils, supported and strengthened one another to resist him. But the worst of all, was a weed with long, fibrous, matted roots, which it seemed impossible to kill. Sometimes, when Felix thought he had quite destroyed it in one place, it would immediately make its appearance in quite a new place, sending up shoots as strong and vigorous as ever.’

‘ Oh, mamma,’ interrupted Henry eagerly, ‘ that is like the bishop-weed; even when you dig up the whole plot of ground, you often cannot get rid of it, but some of its tiresome fibrous roots will begin to grow again, and send out new roots and shoots in every direction.’

‘ It must be very like this weed, then, which so vexed poor Felix, and which was just as difficult to kill. Its name was ‘ Ungodliness,’ and he well knew that it was

particularly hateful to his Father, and yet with all his efforts he never could succeed in destroying it.

‘ Neither did he find less difficulty in his attempts to prepare the ground for the reception of good seed of fruitful plants. The soil was of that stiff, clayey kind which it is so particularly difficult to bring into order. He used a sharp spade, called “The fear of punishment,” and he contrived with it to dig tolerably deep ; but he could by no means break the large clods which his spade turned up. The more he beat or cut them, the harder and more compact did they become ; and after days of hard labour, the ground was no more fit for seed than it had been, but only looked more disorderly and unsightly than before.

Felix threw his spade from him in despair, and resolved to make no more efforts to improve his garden, but to endeavour to forget his fears in the company of his former playfellows, and in the pursuit of those pleasures and amusements in which he had formerly so greatly delighted. “ If I must be miserable hereafter,” he said, “ at least let me be happy while I can.”

‘ He sought out his favourite companions, frequented the most pleasant and beautiful walks, and engaged in all the most amusing games and diversions ; but in vain. He could not forget. Above the merry voices and laughter of his playfellows, above the sweet song of birds, above every sound of joy or kindness, still sounded in his ears that terrible voice, pronouncing the dread sentence, “ Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Amidst the

most beautiful scenes of the garden, still could he see nothing but the open door leading into the dark, gloomy forest, or, worse still, that fearful prison-house. At night, when, wearied and exhausted, he lay down, hoping to forget his misery in sleep, then he would be rendered still more wretched by the thought, "There will be no rest, no sleep, in the prison-house." Every little sorrow was aggravated by the reflection, "There will be nothing but sorrow in the prison-house;" and the words, "In the prison-house I shall never know happiness," seemed to forbid him to enjoy even the most innocent pleasure. The kindness and affection of his friends only reminded him of the malice, the hatred, that would for ever reign there. In short, every little thing that happened, whether good or bad, seemed only to bring more clearly before his mind the horrors which he felt were awaiting him.

' And now a time came when Felix could no longer even try to forget,—when these thoughts of his lost and hopeless condition so pressed upon his mind, that he could think of nothing else, and could do nothing but wander up and down, in the most solitary parts of the garden, wringing his hands and crying, "Lost and undone for ever! I am lost for ever."

' One day, while he was thus lamenting, suddenly he heard a still, small voice, which whispered in his ear, "Thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help."

' Then was Felix exceedingly amazed.

' "Who speaks to me of help or hope?" he cried.
' "Who shall be a help to me, miserable, undone sinner

that I am. O that I might know ! O that one would teach me where help is to be found ! ”

‘ Again came the still, small voice, and whispered, “ Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find. ”

‘ Now, Felix knew that these words were in the book of directions. He had often heard them before, and he had liked to hear them. He had thought them pleasant, kind words ; but I don’t think he had ever really believed them. Indeed, I don’t know that he had ever thought about them enough to know whether he believed them or not.

‘ But now, when his heart was full of grief and fear, they sounded to him like life from the dead ; and throwing himself upon the ground, he cried, “ Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner ! Lord, open mine eyes, that they may see ! Open mine ears, that they may hear ! ”

‘ And suddenly a bright light shone round about him ; and when he looked, he saw before him, One, “ as it had been slain,” and He “ was clothed with light as with a garment,” and His face was “ as the sun shining in his strength.”

‘ Then did Felix tremble, and was exceedingly afraid. But the shining One drew near, and laid His hand on him, and said, “ Fear not ; it is I.”

‘ “ Who art Thou, Lord ? ” said the trembling boy.

‘ “ I am He that was dead, and am alive, and behold I live for evermore. I am He who was slain for thine offences, and was raised again for thy justification. And I am come to reconcile thee to thy Father.”

‘ “ To reconcile me ? ” cried Felix. “ Ah, Lord, how can that be ? Hast Thou seen my garden ? Full of

every hateful weed, and with not a single one of the plants which my Father has commanded me to cultivate. Dost thou not know the terrible handwriting that is against me in the Father's book of remembrance? How can that fearful record of sins be ever blotted out?"

"I have taken away the handwriting that was against you. I have blotted out as with a thick cloud thy sins," said the Holy One, in a voice full of love and tenderness.

"But, Lord, how can this be? Has not my Father sworn by His holiness, that He will not let the sinner go unpunished? Ah, Lord, surely He cannot lie!"

"And hast thou not read, Felix, how I, thine elder Brother, have borne the punishment of thy sins in thy stead; how upon Me has been laid all thine iniquity, and I have borne all the wrath that was due to thee? So that now thy Father is faithful and just to forgive thy sins, which have been punished in Me. Now, He will no longer require from thee the debt which I have paid."

"Then was Felix filled with joy and thankfulness, to hear that the terrible punishment had been borne for him. Ah, how did he rejoice to hear that all the handwriting that was against him was taken away! With what a full heart did he kneel down and worship Him who had borne all his sins and iniquity!"

"Oh, mamma," cried little Henry, "I am so glad to think how Felix must have rejoiced. Now he had got all he wished. Now he would be no longer afraid."

"No, he was no longer afraid of punishment, dear

Henry. But still he had not got all he wished for. At one time he had desired nothing beyond freedom from punishment. Formerly, he had not cared at all about his Father's love. He had desired above all things to keep out of His sight, to forget Him, and to be forgotten by Him.

‘But now, when he heard that his Father had *so* loved him as to send His well-beloved Son to suffer in his stead, he could not rest satisfied with mere forgiveness. He now desired—ah, how earnestly!—to have his Father's love. His soul fainted with the longing it had for his Father's presence and blessing.

‘But he felt that such desires were vain. How could he hope to see his Father smile upon him, to know that his Father loved him, who had so rebelled against a Father of such goodness? No! It could not be. All he could expect was freedom from punishment. He could never, never deserve to be restored to his Father's favour. And as he felt this, the joyful look faded from his eyes, and his countenance became again sad.

‘Now, his elder Brother knew what it was that thus saddened the heart of the poor sinful child. And He drew near to him, and put His arms round him, and laid his weary, aching head upon His own loving breast, and said—

“It is true, Felix, you can never, never deserve your Father's love; but I have deserved it, and all I have deserved I freely give to you. You have no holiness of your own; but I am all holy, and I clothe you in My holiness, and My Father looks upon you,

thus clothed, and loves you for the sake of what I have given you. I have fulfilled *all* righteousness; and as I have taken you to Myself, and count you as a part of Myself, so all My righteousness is counted as yours, and for its sake the Father will love you even as He loves Me.”

‘Oh, mamma, what a great thing! As He loves Him!’ exclaimed Henry.

‘A great thing indeed, Henry. But true, is it not?’

‘Yes, mamma, but somehow one does not think of it.’

‘Ah no, Henry. None of us think of it as we should. You did not think much or feel much this morning, when you repeated to me these blessed words of our Lord, “And Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me;” and yet, my darling boy, what words these are, “As Thou hast loved Me!”’

‘Oh, mamma!’ was all Henry could say. The tears rose to his eyes, and boy-like, ashamed of his emotion, he hid his face upon his mamma’s shoulder. She did not speak; she was glad, thankful to see how much her boy felt this glorious truth; and she lifted her heart in prayer to God, for a blessing upon him.

After some minutes Henry said—

‘But, mamma, had Felix never heard of his elder Brother’s bearing his punishment, and working out a righteousness for him?’

‘Yes, he had heard it often. As I said about the promise, “Ask, and ye shall receive,” he had liked to hear about it. It had been to him like a pleasant song or a beautiful story. But he had never thought much

about it ; it had never seemed real to him until now, when he saw that loving elder Brother before him, when he felt His arms around him, and knew that He would never let him go, never let anything hurt him.'

'But, mamma, we cannot *see* Christ.'

'Not with our bodily eye, my darling. But with the eyes of our mind we can. He is really present with us at this moment, as He was with Felix ; and as really cares for us, and watches over us, through every moment of the day and night, as my story represents Him as doing for Felix. O remember, my dear Henry, that our Saviour is an ever-living Saviour, ever near to each one of us.'

'Felix would know that, mamma, because his Brother said to him, "I am He that was dead and am alive, and behold I live for evermore."'

'Yes, and if at any time Felix forgot how safe he was lying in his Brother's arms, and lying in His bosom, and if he began to get afraid again, and to think that he could never take care of himself, or get safely to his Father's house, then his loving, watchful Brother would say to him, "Fear not, I am with you always ; I who loved you, and gave Myself for you. If, when you were an enemy, you were reconciled to your Father by My death, much more, being reconciled, you shall be saved by My life."'

'Mamma,' said Henry, after looking thoughtfully at the picture for a few minutes, 'I think Felix would feel very safe and happy in his good Brother's arms ; but still I think he would be a little sorry when he looked at his garden and saw that it was so full of

weeds and rubbish, and that it had none of the plants his Father wished it to have.'

'I am sure he was very sorry, dear Henry. And the more fully he came to understand his perfect safety, the more fully he realized the freeness of the love which had bought his safety and happiness, so much the more deeply did he mourn over the barrenness of his garden, and the more earnestly did he desire to have some good fruit to give to the Father and to the Brother who had so loved him.

'He told this sorrow to that tender Brother. And then He reminded him of what the Book said about the third Holy One, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Son. And He promised that that Holy Teacher should come and dwell with Felix, and teach him to keep his garden. And He bade him look up and he should see Him even now.

'Then Felix looked, and behold another shining One stood beside him, and He looked upon Felix with an eye full of love and tenderness. And He told Felix that He would help him to keep his garden; and Felix knew His voice, that it was the voice that had first spoken to him, and given him comfort. Then was Felix exceedingly glad to know that this Holy One was to be ever beside him, teaching and strengthening him.

'Indeed, his happiness was so great, he could scarcely believe it was real. And he began to tell the Teacher that there was not a single good plant in his garden, and that he did not know where to get any.

'And the Holy Teacher told him that He would plant every plant which the Father wished to see, and that

He would watch over them and take care of them, and would send rain and dew to refresh them, and bright sunshine to make them bud and bring forth fruit.

“But the soil?” said the trembling Felix, almost afraid to believe that such news could be true. “It is so hard, and I can do nothing to soften it.”

‘Then the Holy Teacher opened the Book of directions, and read, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” He put into Felix’s hand a new spade, called “Assurance of the Father’s love,” and He promised that the sweet, refreshing dew and rain of heaven should continually descend upon the hard soil, and soften it, and make it fruitful.’

‘Oh, mamma, now, now Felix must be happy!’ said Henry, in a joyful tone.

‘Yes, my love, he was now happy. He could now labour in his garden with some hopes of success; and O how hard, how diligently did he now labour! Not in order to gain a right to be admitted into the palace,—that right had been won for him by his elder Brother,—but because his Book told him that his Father, his Brother, and the Holy Teacher, who had shown such extraordinary love to him, often came to walk in his garden, and that it was their wish that the flowers and fruits should flourish, and the weeds wither and decay.’

‘Felix did not get the weeds rooted out then, mamma?’

‘Not quite rooted out, my love; but a promise was made to him that they should never be suffered to over-

run the whole face of the ground as they had done, but that the Holy Teacher should enable him to keep them under, and to prevent them from injuring his precious plants.

‘I say, enable him to do it; for although every good plant was a free gift from the Father, although all the strength and skill by which the weeds were rooted out, and the precious plants cared for, came from the Holy Teacher, yet it was by Felix’s own hands that all must be done.

‘If he indolently trusted that his garden would be watered and his plants cared for by the Teacher, without his having any trouble, he was sure to find them all drooping and withered for want of the water, which he should have sought for and applied.

‘And if he ever began to rejoice in the beauty or vigour of any particular plant, and to think that now it was so full of life and strength, he need no longer care for it, no longer watch over it so constantly, soon a blight would spread over it, or some small insect would lay its eggs on its leaves, and then it would wither, and all its beauty be gone.’

‘And what were the plants which the Father gave him, mamma?’

‘They were too many and too various for me to remember them all. But some I can tell you. There were many different kinds of the one root called “Faith,” and from every kind sprang several plants.

‘From “Faith in the King’s love,” sprang “Love,” with its bright green leaves, and its lovely blue flower, always looking up to the sky, as if it borrowed from

thence its brilliant azure tint. Nothing could be more beautiful than this plant, particularly in the early morning, while the dew-drops still sparkled and trembled on every leaf, and a bright gem in the heart of each blossom looked up joyously and thankfully to the sun, holding forth to him a mirror in which to reflect his glory. From the same root there was "Joy," with its golden-coloured flowers, so bright and dazzling ; and "Peace," with its lovely silver white blossoms, each reposing so gracefully and beautifully in its delicate green cup.

' Another root was called "Faith in the King's hatred of sin," and it sent forth "Repentance," "Sorrow for sin," "Care to avoid sin," and many such like. These plants, with their dark leaves and sober-coloured flowers, were not so attractive to Felix as those I mentioned before. But he knew that they were pleasing to the King, and therefore he bestowed great pains upon their culture, frequently watering them, as he had been directed, with water drawn from a river called "Serious thoughts of the King's love."

' From the root, "Faith in the King's tender care and unfailing wisdom," grew "Contentment." '

' Oh, mamma, that was in the garden before,' interrupted Henry.

' Yes, but then its root was "Natural feeling, and a desire to make himself happy ;" and although, to the general eye, the two plants might look very much alike, yet the Father saw a great difference between them. The one was precious in His eyes, the other worthless.

' From the fact that a kind of "Contentment" was

formerly a native of the soil, and from its peculiarly healthy, cheerful appearance, with its profusion of pale, primrose flowers, and glowing purple fruit, Felix imagined that it was a very hardy plant. But in this he was mistaken, both it and its neighbour "Gratitude" being particularly liable to injury from the weather. A keen north wind would at any time blight them, or too hot a sun make them wither, unless Felix remembered to beg aid from the Holy Teacher, to shelter them from their influence. A strong, sturdy weed, called "Self-will," was very injurious to them. It struck its strong roots so firmly and so deeply into the ground, that Felix never could get it quite eradicated; and unless he were very careful to cut over its shoots whenever they appeared, they soon overshadowed these low-growing plants, and made them wither. A kind of worm, too, called "Self-esteem," infested that part of the ground, and often seriously injured the roots.

"Gratitude" much resembled "Contentment," only its colour was more glowing, its form more stately. The flowers were larger, and held their heads more erect, and it was also more easily injured.

"Resignation," "Fortitude," "Patience," which all sprung from the same root, had flowers of a deep purple like the violet, and, like it also, gave forth a very sweet smell. They bear the cold and wet better than "Contentment" and "Gratitude," bending before the blasts which tore off the branches, and scattered the fair blossoms of the others, and rising again in all their quiet grace and beauty when it was past. But they,

too, often suffered from the neighbourhood of "Self-will," and the depredations of the worms.

'I have not time to tell of all the different roots, such as "Faith in the King's right to command," "Desire for the King's glory," nor of the numerous plants which sprung from them. I shall only mention one of the many sets of plants which had their root in "Desire to do the King's will." *The* set I wish to mention consisted of "Kindness," "Affection," "Gentleness," "Meekness." Some of these, too, had formerly grown in Felix's garden; but then they had the root "Natural feeling," and were therefore, as I told you, not the kind which the King commanded him to cultivate.

'These plants, besides being well-pleasing to the King, were peculiarly attractive to those of Felix's friends whom he admitted into his garden. Their fruit was both pleasant to the taste, and possessed very peculiar and beneficial properties,—refreshing the weary, soothing the vexed, increasing the pleasure of the happy, and in some measure lessening the sorrow of those in trouble.

'But although I have given you such a bright description of the flourishing state of Felix's garden, and of the many fair, fruitful plants which his Father had planted therein, you must not suppose that he had no difficulties to contend with.

'It is true that the Father had fulfilled His promise, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." If He had not done so, not one of these plants could

have lived for an hour ; nay, they never could have taken root in the old corrupt soil of the garden. But although a new soil had been given to him, yet, as I said before, the roots of many hateful weeds still remained in the ground, and were ever ready to spring up, and to destroy the wholesome plants. Still was the soil apt to become dry, hard, and stony, requiring constant care and diligence in digging, dressing, and watering it.

‘In addition to these difficulties within the garden, Felix had an ever-watchful and very powerful enemy without. He was the ruler of the terrible prison-house, and was the bitter and malignant foe of the good King, and of the poor children of the garden. Nothing gave him so much pleasure as to see a garden overrun with weeds and rubbish, nothing so much pain as to see a single plant flourish which was pleasing to the King. And he was ever on the watch to destroy and injure Felix’s garden. Sometimes he would throw in the seeds of plants peculiarly hateful to the Father, and injurious to everything which Felix was commanded to cultivate. At other times he would endeavour to break through the hedge of “Watchfulness,” which the Holy Teacher had commanded Felix to plant all round the garden, and send in, sometimes a horde of wild beasts to trample down and destroy any living thing they could reach, sometimes whole tribes of smaller vermin and insects to prey upon the fruits, flowers, and leaves, or to gnaw at the roots. Some of these vermin were very pretty, and looked so innocent and harmless, that Felix was apt to imagine that they could do him no injury, but that he might safely leave

them alone. The Holy Teacher, however, was always ready to point out to him their real nature, to help him to drive them away, and to show him the baneful seeds which the enemy had planted. Indeed, as long as Felix continued to labour diligently and carefully, to trust humbly and continually in the Holy Teacher's aid, and to follow the directions of the Book, everything prospered. He had no cause to dread the enemy, for the Holy Teacher was stronger and wiser than he. New and lovely plants were each day added to his garden, each day brought exactly the proportion of rain and sunshine best fitted to make them increase and flourish, and each day saw some of the hateful weeds disappear. Then, too, Felix had the joy of knowing that the King often came down to walk in his garden, and to eat of his fruits.

‘But this flourishing condition could only last while the Holy Teacher continued with him. The enemy, therefore, directed his most strenuous efforts to make Felix grieve and dishonour this loving Friend, so that He might withdraw, and leave him to fight and labour by himself. For this purpose, he sometimes held up to Felix a dazzling but false picture of the flourishing state of his garden, and of the great things which his care and diligence had accomplished, tempting him to gaze so long upon the beauty of his plants as to forget the King who had planted them, to trust to the good condition of his garden for a title of admission into the palace, and to his own ability and efforts to maintain it in that condition.

‘Whenever he succeeded in this, the Holy Teacher

would withdraw and leave Felix to learn his own utter weakness, from the miserable ruin and decay which immediately followed His departure. But this, too, was done in love.

‘When Felix saw plant after plant wither, weed after weed grow up, and found that the soil had become as hard as iron, and that all his watering and digging had no effect upon it, then he would learn his mistake, and turn again humbly to ask for the Holy Teacher’s return.

‘At other times, the enemy induced Felix to grieve his loving Counsellor and Friend by tempting him to amuse himself with his companions, and to neglect his daily task.

‘At one time it happened that Felix had been much occupied with one of his companions, and had been enjoying with him some of the many pleasures with which the kindness of the King had surrounded them, and he had scarcely visited his garden for many days. When he went one morning to look at its condition, he found everything in the utmost disorder.

‘There was his favourite “Love,” with its leaves all withered, its fair clusters of fruit dried up, and the ground strewn with its blue flowers. “Joy’s” stately head was drooping even to the ground, as if bowed down with grief at the ruin of her lovely neighbour; and all that remained of “Peace,” was but a dry, withered stick, without leaf, flower, or sign of life.

‘Poor Felix was in despair. Every plant in the garden was more or less injured, and all his efforts to revive them seemed unavailing. In was in vain that

he attempted to stir up the earth around their roots. The soil had become so hard and baked, that he could not make the least impression on it. It was in vain that he strove to procure the water of "good meditations," with which to refresh them. His vessel was quite dry. And when he hastened to the reservoirs, which the King had provided all over the garden, he forgot to ask the Holy Teacher to accompany him ; and without His aid it was of no use to try to draw water from the well. He lowered his bucket again and again. He went in feverish haste from well to well, but all in vain ; not one drop could he procure, and slowly and sadly he returned to gaze upon the ruin of his lovely plants.

' Then the Son, in His tender love and pity, prayed the Father to send the Holy Teacher to help him ; and the Holy Teacher stood by his side and whispered, " Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God." Then did Felix remember his mistake, and he prayed earnestly for the Holy Teacher's help, and for pardon for his sinful carelessness.

' Then did he experience the faithfulness of the King who has promised, " Before they call, I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." As he looked around while the words of supplication were still upon his lips, he could see a soft refreshing rain falling upon his poor withered plants, and softening the dry parched ground ; he could see the Holy Teacher loosening the hard earth about the roots of " Repentance," watering it and making it again bud, and send

forth fresh shoots. As his earnest prayer was thus turned into a song of adoring praise for the King's tender care and readiness to hear and answer, he could see the leaves of "Love" again acquire their tint of living green, her blossoms again open to the sun; and all along the dry, withered branches of "Peace" appeared small emerald-like buds, giving promise that it should once more bring forth flowers and fruit. So his Father, in His tender love, helped him out of his difficulties at this time; but Felix long remembered with pain the mischief which his carelessness had wrought.

'At another time the enemy espied a small hole in the hedge of "Watchfulness;" and he sent in a little animal called "Seeking our own," in order that it might do what mischief it could, and might enlarge the gap in the hedge so as to admit some still more hurtful animal. This little creature was pretty, and harmless-looking. At first Felix did not pay much attention to it; and afterwards, when he began to notice it more particularly, he rather liked its appearance, and felt disinclined to drive it out. And so he suffered it to run out and in as it pleased, and did not remark how much it had widened the gap, and weakened that part of the hedge, nor how constantly it employed itself in nibbling at the roots or stalks of "Kindness," "Gentleness," and "Patience."

'At last, one day it happened that one of his companions in his play threw a stone into Felix's garden, and struck this little creature. In an instant a fierce, wild animal, called "Anger," sprang with a terrible roar through the now large gap, and dashed furiously

through Felix's garden in his way to the garden of the boy who had injured his ally. There he committed the most terrible ravages, trampling down and destroying the fairest plants, and even threatening the life of the boy himself.

'Felix loved this boy very dearly, so you may believe that he was deeply grieved to see how much mischief his neglect of "Watchfulness" had caused him ; and his grief was increased when he had time to inspect his own garden, and beheld "Kindness" stripped of every one of its bright pink flowers, and "Gentleness" broken over by the root, and its graceful, delicate lilac blossoms lying soiled and trampled into the earth.'

'Oh, mamma,' cried Henry, hiding his blushing face upon the ottoman, 'I know about that, and I am so sorry.'

'Henry knows Felix's sorrow,' said his mamma, gently laying her hand upon his shoulder. He remembers how anger not only destroyed all the fair plants of "Kindness," "Gentleness," and "Patience" in his own garden, but made him ready seriously to injure his weak little sister ; and how the bitter, unkind words which he used in his anger, caused ruin and desolation, and made hateful weeds spring up in her garden.

'Oh, Henry, it is sad, very sad, when our fault not only makes us grieve our tender heavenly Father, but is, besides, the cause of others grieving Him also. I think that, in your case too, it was the little animal "Seeking our own" which enabled the wild beast "Anger" to find such ready admittance. You had for some time been accustoming yourself to maintain your

own rights very obstinately, without much regard to the feelings of others; and therefore, when poor little Mary so far encroached on them, as to take up your ball to play with, "Anger" at once gained the mastery over you. You must follow Felix's example, and pray earnestly for the Holy Teacher to watch for you, that "Anger," and all his train of wild beasts, may be kept out.'

'But, mamma,' said Henry, looking up, and speaking in a very sorrowful tone, 'I am so often and often angry, that I am afraid God will not hear my prayer.'

'Oh, my Henry,' said his mamma, tenderly, 'that fear is like one of the little mischievous animals which the enemy sent into Felix's garden to gnaw away the roots of his "Love," "Joy," "Peace," and all the plants most precious in the eyes of the great King. If our prayers were heard only on account of our goodness, or of our endeavours to avoid sin, which of us could hope to be heard? Dear Henry, while we never can be too certain that we are too sinful and worthless ever to *deserve* that God should answer us, we never can be too certain, that for our blessed Saviour's sake even the weakest of our prayers will be accepted.

'This was a truth which Felix greatly delighted in, and with much reason. What had he ever done to *deserve* that the King should hear him? As long as he dared, he had despised and disobeyed his Father's commands; and even after his garden was as flourishing as I have described, what share of merit could he claim? The Holy Teacher alone renewed the soil, and made it fit for cultivation. The Holy Teacher alone planted

the plants, and made them grow, bud, and bring forth fruit. The Holy Teacher alone destroyed the weeds. And although He made use of Felix's arm in these works, it was He alone who gave strength to that arm, and made Felix willing to use it.

'Had Felix's salvation depended in the smallest degree upon his own merits, his garden must have gone to ruin, and he must have been destroyed. But the love of his Brother was as free as it was full, as undeserved as it was unwearied. It was His own goodness and tender pity that made Him have compassion, and that goodness could never fail. It was because He was rich in love that He loved him, and His riches could never be exhausted. In the beautiful words of Scripture, "I, the Lord, do keep it; I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day." In His strength Felix was strong, and in His salvation he was safe.

'As time passed on, Felix learned to know this better every day, to know more fully his own weakness and his Helper's strength; and in proportion as he knew this more thoroughly, he was the more diligent and constant in all his labours. For it was a fact in the history of every one of these children, that the more they were convinced that it was not the beauty or good order of their gardens that could make amends for their past sins, and that their safety depended only upon what their elder Brother had done and suffered, so much the more earnest were they that their gardens should excel in everything that could please such a loving Brother.

‘As Felix went on increasing in diligence, earnestness, and humble trust in the Holy Teacher, his garden increased daily in beauty and fruitfulness. Old plants grew and flourished, and new plants were added. One plant which latterly increased in an extraordinary degree, was “Desire for the King’s glory.” It latterly quite overtopped its neighbour, “Desire for salvation,” and its growth was very steady and constant.

‘One might observe as it increased, that Felix became more anxious that his young companions should begin to labour, and that their gardens should also be filled with fair plants.

‘Of these companions some mocked at Felix, and called him a fool for all his labour, saying that their wild flowers were as good as his cultivated ones; others said it was all very true, that they really must some day begin to labour, only to-day they were busy, and so ran off, and forgot all about the matter.’

‘And did none listen, mamma?’ cried Henry. ‘Look at this busy boy. Surely he must have listened. See how full his garden is.’

‘Yes,’ replied Mrs Danvers, ‘that boy was indeed diligent. He began to labour before Felix. In reading the Book, his attention was aroused by the descriptions of the prison-house and of the palace; and he resolved to spare no pains to avoid the one, and to gain admission into the other.

‘And to this resolution he adhered. From early in the morning till late at night, he might be seen day after day labouring in his garden, digging up the soil, destroying the weeds, planting, pruning, watering,

and using every means he could devise to ensure success.'

'And he did succeed, mamma?' cried Henry, eagerly. 'Surely he did succeed. His garden seems full of plants.'

'No, my child,' answered Mrs Danvers, solemnly, 'he did not succeed. Not one of all these plants were planted by the Holy Teacher, not one was pleasing to the Father. He had never been convinced of the worthlessness of the natural soil of his garden, had never asked the Father to renew it. He had never felt his need of a Helper in his labours, never felt his need of an atonement for his disobedience. He trusted entirely to the beauty of his plants for admission into the palace; nor was it until he stood before the terrible judgment-seat, that he was convinced how utterly worthless these plants were, and how deceitful their roots. What he called "Love," "Joy," "Peace," had their roots in "Faith in the King's love to *him* for *his* goodness;" what he called "Repentance," and "Sorrow for sin," had their roots in "Sorrow to lose his good opinion of himself;" and from such roots nothing could spring up but what was utterly distasteful to the King. In these he had trusted for safety, and when these failed him he had nothing else to look to; and on him was pronounced the fearful sentence, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." He had never experienced any molestation from the enemy who so tormented Felix. That wily foe suffered him to labour as diligently as he pleased, well aware that his labours could never produce fruit pleasing to the King. And

now he welcomed him, with malignant joy, to that prison-house where he was to abide for ever.'

'Oh, mamma, I am so sorry. But surely some listened? That boy who hurt "Seeking our own," you said, had good plants?'

'Yes, Henry, he had. Felix's example had been very useful to him. He learned from him to pray for the Holy Teacher's help, and the Holy Teacher taught him to trust in his elder Brother's salvation. Many fair plants grew up in his garden; and I believe, in the end, that he was received into the palace for the sake of his Brother's goodness. But he never prospered quite so well as Felix. He was not watchful enough against doubts and fears, which the enemy sent into his garden, and which did great mischief to his flowers. He looked too much at his own weakness, and at the imperfections of his garden; and forgot how strong, and how ready to help, the Holy Teacher was, and how entirely his salvation depended upon his elder Brother. He often grieved the Holy Teacher by his want of confidence, and caused him to withdraw. And although, as I said before, he was saved in the end, yet his garden never was very prosperous, and the King received little pleasure or glory from it.

'There was another boy, whom Felix loved very dearly; a kind, gentle little fellow, who had been very constant in his efforts to amuse Felix, at that time when he was held a prisoner by sickness. He remained with him to the very last, even when others were wearied of endeavouring to amuse him. He witnessed all Felix's alarm at the prospect of going

before the judgment-seat; and he, too, became alarmed and anxious about his own garden. Felix made him a sharer in all the lessons which the Holy Teacher taught him; and this boy believed that he, too, had been taught to trust in his elder Brother's salvation.

· 'I am not sure about this boy. I am not sure whether he ever got a new soil to his garden, and whether he was saved in the end or not. I know that the Holy Teacher sometimes visited him; but I know, too, that he constantly grieved Him away by his idleness and carelessness. He thought that he had the root "Faith," but if so, it brought forth no visible fruit; and therefore I very much fear it was a dead root, and of no value. I much fear that he was never admitted into the palace; and this at least I know, that the disorderly state of his garden had a most hurtful effect upon many of his companions, causing some of them to trust in themselves, and to refuse to listen to the story of the salvation of the elder Brother, because they said that it was his trust in that which made him so careless. And his example caused others to be careless too, and to forget that solemn word in the Book, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

'Felix grieved bitterly over his friend's idleness, both for his friend's sake and for the King's sake; but his exhortations were of little avail, and his friend only learned to shun his company, and to keep away from his garden, because his entreaties and his example were painful reproaches to him.'

'And was Felix frightened when he had to go through the dark wood at last, mamma?'

'A little frightened at first. All his mistakes, all the instances of his carelessness, all the times he had grieved the Holy Teacher, came into his mind, and made him fearful. But the Holy Teacher was by his side, and whispered in his ear, Thou shalt be "found in Him (Christ), not having" thine "own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And Felix felt the arms of his loving Brother around him, felt that his head was resting on His bosom; and he was carried by Him through the dark wood, and brought by Him to the judgment-seat. Never had the flowers in Felix's garden looked so poor and worthless, never had the weeds looked so numerous as now, when he saw them all described in the King's judgment-book. But the blessed elder Brother blotted out all the account of his failings with the blood which He had shed when He suffered the punishment in his stead, and wrote down his goodness and holiness to Felix's account. And then Felix found that the justice of the King, which he had so much dreaded, was ready to take his part, making it impossible that he should suffer punishment after his Brother had suffered it for him, or that he should not be rewarded on account of that Brother's perfect goodness, which was counted as his. And so Felix was received into the palace, there to dwell for ever with his Father, his Brother, and his Holy Teacher.'

After Mrs Danvers had concluded, Henry stood for some time looking thoughtfully on the picture without

speaking. Mrs Danvers asked him if he liked the story.

‘O yes, mamma,’ he said, ‘and it is a beautiful picture. But I was thinking, mamma. I was thinking about that little boy whom Felix loved. The careless boy, you know, mamma. You said that his bad example made others careless and disobedient ; and I was thinking how sorry he would be, if he were to see some of these careless ones taken away into the dark wood, and if he were to think that they might be cast into the prison-house, and never come out of it, and that it was his idleness that had ruined them. Oh, how sorry he would be !’

‘He would indeed, Henry,’ said Mrs Danvers solemnly. ‘And perhaps some of these poor lost ones might have been very dear to him.’

‘Perhaps even his own brothers or sisters, mamma. Oh, how terrible !’ And Henry’s eyes filled with tears.

‘And did you think of your own brother and sister, my Henry,’ asked his mamma, in a low voice, as she put her arm round him.

‘Yes, mamma,’ he whispered, laying his head upon her breast. ‘Mamma, I think I will take more care of the plants of “Kindness” and “Gentleness,” so that Mary and Johnnie may perhaps be led by them to think more of the good Father, who has commanded me to have such plants in my garden. Although they are so little, they can understand these plants at least, because they give them pleasure.’

‘Yes, my darling boy. And we must remember, too, that that loving Father delights in the beauty and

fruitfulness of all our plants. Oh, Henry, is it not both a precious and a solemn truth, that "the Lord," the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, "taketh pleasure in the prosperity of His saints?" Surely it is a wonderful proof of His condescending love, that He asks fruit from us.'

'Yes, mamma, and gives us the plants, and the dew, and rain, and sunshine to make them grow. Mamma, I think this picture will have been like dew to my garden. I think,' he added, bashfully, hiding his face, 'I think it has made my "Desire to please the Lord" grow a little.'

'For ever blessed be the Lord, who has been so gracious to you, my darling,' answered his mamma, kissing him, while tears of joy and thankfulness rose to her eyes. 'And oh, my dearest Henry, do not forget to thank the Lord for His goodness, and to pray to Him to uphold you always in the way of life, and to give you His Spirit to draw and keep you ever closer and closer to Him.'



THE AMULET;

OR,

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF.



MINNIE GREY and her mother had been sitting together for some time at work without speaking, when Minnie suddenly broke the silence, by saying, with great earnestness—

‘Mamma, I do wish there were fairies now.’

Mrs Grey looked up, with a smile, and Minnie added, quickly—

‘Oh, of course, mamma, I know quite well that there never were fairies. I am not so silly,’ with an air of great good sense, ‘as to believe in fairy tales; only I do wish that fairy tales were true, and that fairies now lived on the earth, and that I could get at them.’

‘Indeed, Minnie; and may I ask what wondrous fairy gift is now specially in your mind?’

‘Oh, no gift for myself,’ in a self-satisfied tone; ‘or, at least, no gift to give pleasure to myself alone. Mine is not a selfish wish, mamma. If I could see a fairy this moment, I should only ask from her the power to make all around me happy.’

‘A modest request, dear Minnie, certainly.’

‘At least, mamma, it is not a selfish one. I have been thinking about it all day. In the morning, when George looked so dull, because you and papa were displeased with him for being too late for prayers, and Harry was so much vexed at losing his nicely-written theme, it came into my head how pleasant it would be if I could, in one moment, with one word or motion of my hand, make them quite happy again. Then, after breakfast, I thought of it again when I saw little Susan and Ella fretting because the snow-shower prevented them from getting out, and little Hugh crying over his broken cart, and poor Betsy in the nursery in such deep grief because she had heard that her father was very ill, and my own good Miss Harvey came in looking so grave and sad because her brother had not got the situation he wished for.’

‘Take breath, my dear,’ said Mrs Grey, smiling; ‘so long a list of calamities has quite overwhelmed you.’

‘Well, but, mamma, don’t you agree with me that it would be delightful to possess some talisman, or amulet, by which one could remove all these sorrows in a moment, by which one could make every one happy?’

‘And can you not do a little towards such a happy result, even without a fairy amulet, Minnie?’ Mrs Grey asked, gravely.

‘Oh, but a little would not content me,’ Minnie answered, with some impatience; ‘and it would be at best so very little that I can do. Now, you know, with a fairy gift such as I think of, I could do so much, so very much.’

‘But in the meantime, Minnie, might it not be as well to do at least the little that is in your power?’

‘Oh, of course, of course,’ Minnie said, with increased impatience. ‘There, that tiresome thread has gone into a knot again. I really must put away my work now, my hands are so hot, and the thread is so tiresome, getting into knots incessantly.’

‘But will Susan not be disappointed if her doll’s petticoat is not ready for her to-morrow? There is so little to do, it seems a pity not to finish it when she expects you will,’ Mrs Grey said, persuasively.

‘Oh, I never promised to finish it to-night. I only said I should get it finished as soon as I could.’

‘Yes, as soon as you could,’ her mamma said, with grave emphasis.

‘But I cannot finish it to-night. No one could work on with hands so hot as mine are,’ Minnie answered fretfully.

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Minnie’s eldest brother, George. He looked harassed, and began to turn over the books on the table, as if in search of something he could not find.

‘Have you lost anything, George?’ his mamma asked, kindly.

‘It is the little book about ferns, which uncle Maurice lent me last summer. He is with papa just now, and wishes to have it to take home with him, and I cannot find it; and I have not got through half my lessons, and,’ with a disturbed glance at the little timepiece, ‘it is almost eight o’clock.’

Mrs Grey looked significantly at Minnie ; but Minnie

was busy putting her work-box in order, and took no further notice of George's troubles than to remark complacently, 'that it was very foolish of him not to keep his books and things in better order. She always knew where to find anything she wanted.'

George's vexation was not diminished by a remark provokingly unseasonable when he was in distress, and provokingly unsuitable from a younger sister. He might have made an angry retort had not Mrs Grey interfered, by rising and going to help her boy in his search. With her aid the book was found, and George went away quite happy. 'There was still time,' he said, 'to learn all his lessons, and he was very much obliged to his mamma.'

Mrs Grey sat down again to her work. Minnie had arranged her work-box to her liking, and was luxuriating in perfect idleness, sitting before the fire, dreaming pleasantly of all the happiness she could confer on every one if she had only the wished-for fairy gift. She was awakened from her reverie by her mother's voice.

'Minnie,' she said, 'I think I have seen, in an old book I have up stairs, directions relative to such an amulet as you desire. Suppose I were to try to make you one.'

'Oh, mamma,' Minnie cried, springing up from her seat, 'how delightful! But,' in a disappointed tone, 'of course you are not in earnest. You are laughing at me. There are no such things as amulets; at least, they are of no use.'

'Well,' said Mrs Grey, smiling, 'I cannot promise that my amulet shall equal our old fairy friend's in efficacy. But at any rate, if you like, I shall make

you one according to these directions I speak of, and we shall see whether it be of use or not.'

'Like! oh, of course I should like it, Minnie cried, eagerly. 'But, mamma, what is it? how do you make it? is it worn round the neck? does it?'——

'Stop, stop, my dear. I shall not answer any questions about it. You shall see it when it is made.'

'And when shall I see it, mamma? When will you make it?'

'To-morrow; if nothing unforeseen occurs, I shall have it ready by to-morrow night. I shall bring it to you when I come to see you after you have gone to bed. But, remember, I shall expect you not to torment me with questions. If you occupy my time and thoughts unnecessarily, I shall not be able to keep my promise.'

'Oh, but I shall not tease or occupy you in any way. I shall take care to keep the little ones from teasing you,' was Minnie's eager promise.

And she kept it. Prompted by the strong desire to see and possess her amulet, she was particularly well behaved all the next day, and took a great deal of pains to amuse the younger children and keep them from annoying her mamma, or interrupting her in her occupations. When Minnie could do this when she chose, it was a pity that she did not more frequently consider her mother's comfort, and give her more help in taking care of the little ones.

The day seemed a very long one to Minnie. At no time particularly fond of playing with her younger brother and sisters, she felt it very irksome to conform

herself to their tastes and fancies so entirely as was necessary to keep them good-humoured and happy; and, with her mind full of thoughts about the amulet, the constant claims upon her attention became very trying.

The longest day must, however, come to a close. The last hour had passed rapidly and pleasantly in play with her elder brothers, and now bed-time had come,—the long-wished-for hour; prayers were over; Minnie had wished her papa and mamma good night, and gone to her room. She had gone through the usual form of reading a chapter of the Bible, and of kneeling to pray; but I fear she thought more of her amulet than of anything else. She jumped into bed, and lay waiting and listening to every sound.

The parlour door opened; Minnie heard her mother's step on the stair. Mrs Grey went to her own room.

'She has gone for the amulet,' Minnie thought; and although she repeated, for the twentieth time that day, 'Of course, I know mamma is only jesting; of course, I know she cannot really make an amulet,' yet her heart beat quick with expectation, and she watched the door with eager, straining eyes.

'Oh, mamma, have you got it?' she cried breathlessly, springing up in bed when her mother came in.

With a good-humoured smile at the child's eagerness, Mrs Grey went up to the bed-side and placed in her hands the wished-for treasure.

Very pretty it was. A small round bag of crimson velvet, about the size of a crown, fringed all round with twisted loops of little gold beads, the strings of fine gold cord, with beautiful, tiny, fairy-looking tassels.

Minnie was delighted. Now she looked at it closely to admire the delicate workmanship of fringe and tassels, and now held it up at a little distance, that the light of the lamp might sparkle on the beads, while she poured forth an overwhelming torrent of exclamations, praises, and questions.

‘How did you ever think of making it, mamma? How beautiful it is! So exactly like a real fairy amulet. How much trouble you have taken with it!’

‘I shall not grudge the trouble if the amulet answers its purpose,’ Mrs Grey said, a little seriously.

‘Ah, mamma, you are laughing at me,’ Minnie said, laughing herself. ‘Of course, I know that there is no fairy gift connected with it, pretty though it be.’

‘You have not yet read the words of magic,’ Mrs Grey answered, pointing to some words embroidered in gold thread on the side of the bag.

Minnie had seen the embroidery, but, in the first excitement of surprise and pleasure, she had not thought of reading the words. She now looked at them with eager curiosity. The letters, though small, were very distinct. And she easily read aloud the words, ‘As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.’

There was a long pause. Minnie looked grave, and a little disappointed. Mrs Grey watched her face for a few minutes, in silence, and then said gently—

‘Why that look of disappointment, my Minnie? You did not seriously expect that my amulet was to confer on you a fairy gift?’

‘No—oh, no, mamma; but’——

‘But what, my child?’

Minnie did not answer, and Mrs Grey continued, still more gently and kindly—

‘Are you vexed to think how much the wished-for fairy power depends upon yourself? Are you unwilling to test the efficacy of my amulet?’

‘Why, no, mamma, it is not that,’ speaking slowly, and with hesitation. ‘But you see, mamma, this is nothing new.’

‘No, Minnie; I told you that I should find the directions for my amulet in an old book. But does that make them less valuable?’ was Mrs Grey’s serious answer.

‘Oh, mamma, of course not. But then, you see, I have known these words for a long, long time, and yet I have not been able to make people happy.’

‘Knowing God’s commandments and keeping them are two different things, my child,’ Mrs Grey answered. ‘Have you tried how far the keeping of this one might help to make others happy?’

Minnie did not answer. She was always very unwilling to confess a fault. But she was truthful, and could not say that she had tried much to keep this commandment. Mrs Grey stooped down and kissed her affectionately.

‘Good night, my love,’ she said. ‘I do not wish you to answer my question now. Nay, I do not wish you to answer it to me at all, unless you please. Think over it, and answer it to yourself at your leisure. You wished to wear your amulet round your neck, so I have made for it this outer covering. Those pretty gilt

tassels might not be very pleasant on your neck if they were not covered ;' and she put into Minnie's hands a neat black silk bag, just large enough to hold the gayer one, tassels and all. A narrow piece of black velvet, with a pretty clasp, was fastened to this outer bag, so that Minnie could easily wear the amulet concealed under her dress, in the approved style of fairy tales.

Minnie thanked her mamma warmly for this fresh instance of consideration ; and Mrs Grey, again kissing her, put out the light and left her.

Minnie sat up in bed, and, by the light of a bright moon, carefully packed her pretty amulet into its case, musing gratefully as she did so upon her mamma's kindness, upon the care she had taken to meet her wishes in every particular, and how little she had grudged either time or trouble to give her pleasure.

'It should not be in vain,' Minnie thought, as she lay down, after carefully depositing her treasure under her pillow. 'I ought to let mamma see that her pretty amulet has done me good. And perhaps, after all, she may be right. Perhaps I do not try enough to do to others as I would they should do to me, at least not always.'

Having once admitted the possibility of error, although only in the form of a faint 'perhaps,' Minnie was able to judge herself more fairly. She began to think over the various unhappinesses which had first aroused her wish for a fairy gift, and to inquire how far she might have remedied them by the due observance of the rule on her amulet.

Her brother George's had been the first gloomy face

of the day. He had displeased his parents by being too late for prayers: hence his unhappiness. That George was too fond of his bed, and very apt to sleep too long, were facts well known to every member of the family. Harry, who shared his room, generally took upon himself the task of getting him out of bed in good time. But, on Wednesday morning, Harry had begun to give reading lessons to a poor orphan boy, in whom they were all interested, and who was so much occupied through the day, that an early morning hour was the only one he could give to his education. Minnie had known of Harry's engagement, had heard him go down stairs; and the room the boys occupied being directly above her own, had listened, and ascertained that George was not beginning to move about. Nay, further, it had even occurred to her that it would only be kind and sisterly to go up stairs and awake him. But then the story she had left half finished the night before was so interesting; she did so long to know the end. And the charms of the story-book, and the bright fire she knew she should find in the breakfast-room, had overcome the wish to serve her brother. She had gone straight down stairs, and left George to take care of himself.

And Harry's lost version. Minnie blushed as she remembered that, while undressing on Tuesday night, she had recollected to have seen this same version lying in a perilous position on the corner of the mantel-shelf, where it was liable to be thrown down inside the fender, and carried off by the housemaid in the morning. She had thought of going up to warn Harry about it. But the

passage up stairs was dark, and it was so disagreeable to go groping along a long dark passage, knocking one's self against doors and walls. And, besides, Minnie had taken off her frock, it would be so much trouble to put it on again. In this case, as in the former, Minnie hardly required to ask herself the question, Should I have liked him to do so to me?

As respected the misfortunes of the little girls and Hugh, Minnie's conscience was more clear, in the first consideration of the case. Of course she could not have prevented the snow-shower, nor could she have mended Hugh's broken cart. But she had scarcely satisfied herself with such assertion, before the question arose to her mind, 'Could she not have made some amends to the little ones for disasters she could not altogether prevent? Could she not have amused the little girls with a story? And might not the judicious loan of one of her own playthings have made Hugh forget his cart? And Minnie recalled days gone by, when she too was little, and had cried over a broken doll, or a rainy day, and when her mamma had laid aside her book or work, to devise amusement for her disappointed or fretful child. Minnie had liked her mother to do so to her. In similar circumstances she should like her mother to do so now; but she had not done so to her brother and sisters.

The disappointment to Miss Harvey's brother, the accident to Betsy's father, were certainly matters above and beyond her power. But Minnie's conscience was more keen-sighted now; and it soon occurred to her, that had she been Miss Harvey, she should have liked a

more docile and attentive pupil than Minnie Grey had been on that same Wednesday. And she felt that it might have been some comfort to poor Betsy, in her sore grief, to have been relieved of the charge of the little girls and Hugh, while nurse was occupied with baby, who was ill, and Mrs Grey was engaged with visitors. Again Minnie blushed, as she remembered that her mamma's first thought, on being at liberty, had been to send for the children, and as she thought how easily she could have taken charge of them, and so have relieved the young nursery-maid an hour sooner from the irksome task of amusing them, while her heart was heavy with grief and anxiety.

These thoughts and recollections were mortifying to Minnie's self-love ; but yet there was something cheering in them too. It was pleasant to see how many ways of being useful were open to her—how much she had it in her power to do for the happiness of others.

'Yes, my pretty amulet,' she said, as she once more took it into her hand, 'I shall wear you every day, and you shall remind me always to do to others as I should like others to do to me.'

And, well pleased with herself for her good resolution and anticipated good behaviour, Minnie fell asleep.

On awakening the next morning, Minnie's first thought was about her pretty amulet ; her second was given to her good resolution. And she sprang out of bed with the pleasant feeling of one who had a great deal to do, who was going to be very useful, to be like a sunbeam in the house, bringing pleasure to every one.

To get her brother George up in proper time was naturally the first good office which presented itself to her mind. This was again one of the mornings devoted to poor Ned. Harry was busy with him, and George was left to sleep on in peace. But Minnie resolved that it should not be her fault if he were too late for prayers this morning. She knew well that it was useless to wake him too soon. He would certainly fall asleep again, if he did not rise immediately; he would as certainly not rise until he could not help it. So, as Minnie was particularly early this morning, she did not go up to him until she was herself ready to go to the dining-room.

As she reached the foot of the stairs she heard his room door open, and a light step on the passage; and, looking up, she saw her mamma coming down.

‘Oh, mamma!’ she cried, ‘you have been before me; you have roused George.’

‘Yes; I have got the lazy boy fairly out of bed,’ Mrs Grey said, smiling. ‘So you are spared that trouble. But I am very glad, dear, that you thought of it;’ and she looked so glad, so approving, that Minnie was quite elated.

‘Ah, mamma! it was the amulet, you see,’ she answered with a happy little blush; and, kissing her mother, she ran gaily down stairs, well pleased with herself, and well pleased to have a good deal of time at her own disposal before prayers.

She wished to crochet a purse for her papa’s Christmas present. Her daily governess, Miss Harvey, had promised to teach her how to make a new kind with steel

beads ; and Minnie was glad to have time to wind the silk, and thread some of the beads, before Miss Harvey came. The skeins of silk were entangled, and took longer to wind than Minnie had expected ; and she had only finished doing it, when the family began to assemble for prayers.

George was in time, and no more. He came in last, and came in looking very cold and miserable. It was a cold morning, with a keen north wind. The boy's bed-room was a very cold one, at the top of the house, and facing the north. Harry had opened the window to feed his pigeons, and, shutting it carelessly, had left a little chink open. Poor sleepy George had been so hurried, that he had had no time to think of anything except of getting ready in time. He had not observed the open window, and the keen, biting blast had been blowing in upon him all the time he was dressing and reading his Bible ; so that by the time he got down stairs he was thoroughly chilled, and very miserable. He hastened to the fire ; but before he had time even to stretch out his cold, blue hands over it, the gong sounded for prayers, and Mr Grey, looking round, said—

‘Take your seat, my boy, the servants are coming in.’

George looked ruefully at his accustomed seat, which happened to be near one of the windows, and far from the fire. Minnie's, on the contrary, was, by right of the eldest daughter, next her father, and in most comfortable proximity to the bright hearth.

‘Minnie,’ George whispered, entreatingly, ‘should you mind much changing places for just this once ? I am so cold.’

'Mind! of course I should. I don't see why I should give up my own seat,' Minnie said, crossly; but she caught her mother's eye. At the same moment a sudden turn of her head caused her to feel the clasp of the amulet on her neck. She rose, saying, 'You may take it, if you like.' But she said it so ungraciously, and moved away so reluctantly, that she attracted Mr Grey's notice to what was going on.

'George,' he said, a little sharply, 'I am ashamed of you; how can you think of taking your sister's seat?'

'Oh, never mind, papa,' Minnie said, with the air of a martyr; 'he may keep it, if he likes.'

The servants coming in, there was no time for more. George kept the seat, but he felt very uncomfortable. Naturally of a kind and obliging disposition, it was real pain to him to read in Minnie's discontented face how great she felt the sacrifice she had made for him. And he had been so carefully trained to consider it a brother's duty to protect his sister, to care for her comfort, and to give her the preference in all things, that he was haunted with a disagreeable sense of shame at having allowed her to give way to him. During both prayers and breakfast, these self-reproachful feelings were constantly recurring, not perhaps deep enough to make him positively unhappy, but yet sufficiently distinct to make him feel uncomfortable and out of spirits, and to make him wish very heartily that he had never asked Minnie to change her seat.

Minnie observed his dejection, with a feeling half disappointed, half triumphant.

'It does not seem as if I could do so much good

after all. After all, perhaps it has been less my fault than mamma thinks, that I have not made people happier all this time.'

Breakfast was very early at the Greys, as the boys had to be at school by nine o'clock, and their school was at a considerable distance. Miss Harvey did not come to the little girls till ten, so that Minnie had more than an hour for her own occupations. Of this she now eagerly availed herself to get on with stringing the steel beads, so as to be quite ready for Miss Harvey's instructions. She was so busy, and so much interested in her occupations, that she took no note of what was passing, and did not know that any one was in the room, until a deep sigh from one corner caught her ear. She looked up, and saw little Ella sitting on the floor before a large box of bricks. About half-a-dozen were in her lap, and she was looking despairingly from them to the box, already, as it seemed, too full, but which ought to have held these in addition.

'What is the matter, Ella?' Minnie asked.

The little face brightened directly; she hoped to get help in her trouble.

'Oh, Minnie,' she cried, 'it is those tiresome bricks. Mamma says I must put them all right before I leave them, and nurse is waiting to show me how to make Dolly's petticoat, and she says she shall not be able to do anything for me after baby awakes, and Miss Harvey will be here very soon, and by the time I have said my lesson baby will be sure to be awake.'

'You stupid little thing, you should not have taken out the bricks when you knew how little time you

should have to play with them,' Minnie answered carelessly, and bending again over her beads.

'I only forgot,' Ella sighed, in a low, disappointed tone, the hopes of assistance fading away before Minnie's determined air of pre-occupation.

A minute or two passed in silence, then came another very deep sigh from Ella. Minnie took no notice, but she heard it, and it fretted her to hear it. It fretted her still more to feel the amulet lying on her neck, and to see with her mind's eye its pretty little golden words.

Ella made another vain effort to thrust in one of her bricks, and then, with tearful eyes, and in a timid voice, entreated Minnie to help her.

Very cross was Minnie's face, still crosser her voice, saying, 'Tiresome little monkey,' as she threw down her needle, and went to her little sister. She pulled impatiently at the clasp fastening the velvet ribbon, as if it were choking her; crosser and crosser grew both looks and tone, when she reached the spot, and saw the state of the unfortunate bricks.

'You are very idle and careless, Ella. I am sure you know quite well that is not the way to put them in. Each one has its proper place. How could you ever expect to get them all into the box in that confused, tumbling-about way?'

Ella looked very sorry, very penitent. She did know how to put them properly away; but she had been in too great haste, her little head had been too full of thoughts about her doll's petticoat, to be able to attend properly to the packing of the bricks.

‘I am very sorry, Minnie; but it was these difficult sloping pieces, they would not lie smooth.’

‘Difficult sloping pieces! nonsense! they are as easily put away as any others. It was only that you did not choose to take pains. You are the most careless, stupid child I ever saw;’ and Minnie began to throw out the bricks with heedless, impatient violence.

Little Ella drew her feet out of the way of the fast-flying pieces, and sat with melancholy countenance, watching Minnie’s angry looks and gestures, and wishing she were not so stupid and careless.

And now Minnie had reached the beginning of the difficulties. The first two or three rows had been laid in neatly and well; but four wedge-shaped bricks had puzzled poor Ella’s pre-occupied mind. She had forgotten that the thick part of one should be laid on the thin part of the one below; and after trying many wrong ways, had at last in despair placed them across each other, and tried to cover them as quickly as possible with straight pieces.

‘Now look, you stupid monkey, how they ought to lie, and don’t be so careless again; and don’t sit gaping there, but give me up the bricks: you might, at any rate, do so much to help me, when you have given me so much trouble. Give me that long brick—not that one, stupid,’ as the frightened child hastily presented the one she could most quickly get. ‘There, get out of the way, you are doing wrong on purpose, I do believe;’ and pushing her violently from her, Minnie finished her packing in silent displeasure.

Ella watched her with tearful eyes; and when at last

dismissed with an ungracious 'You can go now, child; don't stand staring there; don't you see I have put away the box?' she went slowly and sadly up to the nursery, oppressed with a sense of her own great stupidity and thoughtlessness.

Minnie resumed her seat, and her stringing of beads, but with no very pleasant feelings. She felt for her amulet as she sat down, and tried to congratulate herself on having observed its commandment. But in spite of herself, Ella's downcast, melancholy little face would present itself before her mind, and she could not feel so satisfied with herself as she wished.

Poor Minnie! she certainly had bungled in her first attempts to observe her new rule. And so it was through the day. In the desire to show her unselfishness, her readiness to do to others as she wished others to do to her, she made her friends uncomfortable instead of serving them,—now with ostentation giving up her own way, when no one required it of her; and now, with ill-timed officiousness, pressing services which could have been well dispensed with.

Her governess, Miss Harvey, was on this day suffering from intense headache. From the moment Minnie discovered the fact, she tormented the poor sufferer with unceasing questions how she felt, with uncalled-for expressions of sympathy, and useless proposals of a remedy. Now she insisted upon Miss Harvey's trying a different seat from the one she usually occupied, until the other yielded the point, and chose a less convenient position in preference to the annoyance of further argument. Now she interrupted a difficult explanation to

Susan, by an eager request to be allowed to fetch her a footstool or a pillow. And when poor Miss Harvey was only anxious to get through her duties as quickly and peaceably as possible, Minnie impeded her in every way, distracting Ella and Susan's attention by exhortations to them to be quiet and attentive, and saying her own lessons particularly ill, while her eyes were wandering round the room in search of some supposed crevice through which the air might come upon Miss Harvey; or her thoughts were busy in her mother's medicine chest, seeking a specific for headache. Even gentle Miss Harvey's patience gave way, and, worn out with a long argument upon the propriety of Minnie's omitting her usual music-lesson, she exclaimed—

‘Oh, Minnie, you are a very tiresome child!’

Greatly offended, Minnie became instantly silent. But as it was the silence of sullenness, it did not greatly relieve poor Miss Harvey's harassment and discomfort. And as her thoughts were now as much occupied with her own wrongs as they had been before with the proofs of her own goodness, I am not sure that the silent, dignified Minnie was much more attentive than the talkative, officious Minnie had been. Certainly Minnie had singularly failed in making her kind governess happy.

In the afternoon, Minnie had a visit from her cousin Sophia. The two girls had arranged to take a long walk on the morrow, to see an old woman who had been nurse in their grandfather's family. But Sophia had this forenoon received an invitation to spend the following day with a young friend, and to go with her

to see a private collection of pictures which she had long greatly desired to see ; and she had come to ask Minnie if she should dislike putting off their walk to another day.

Now, Minnie did not really care about this delay ; on the contrary, she did not think the walk would be pleasant so long as the cold north wind lasted. But she did not say so pleasantly and cheerfully, as she might have done. Determined to show herself unselfish, she gave the required consent with a lofty air of generosity, an ostentatious appearance of self-sacrifice, which made poor Sophia fear that she had done wrong to ask it, and that she had really deprived Minnie of a great pleasure. - Sophia went home at liberty to accept the pleasant invitation, but not much, if at all, happier than she might have been had her request been refused.

When the boys returned from school, Harry ran hastily into the drawing-room, asking for a book. Minnie was reading it at the time. Harry did not see this ; and, had she chosen, she could have gratified his wish for the book without suffering him to know that he had deprived her of it. But this would not have suited Minnie's thirst for display. She gave up the book to Harry, but took care he should be fully aware how much she wished to keep it. Harry, of course, refused to take it from her. But Minnie insisted, with an exaggerated air of kindness and sweet self-denial, until the boy, provoked that she should think him so selfish as to agree to such a proposal, flung the book on the floor, and left the room in a pet. Another failure ! Minnie felt disappointed ; but she put her

hand up to her amulet, and congratulated herself upon having carefully observed its rule.

It was again evening. Minnie again sat by her mother's side at work, as when we saw her first. And now, as then, she had been very silent. She looked wearied and dejected, her fingers moved slowly, listlessly, and she often drew long sighs.

'You are very sad and sighing to-night, my Minnie. Has anything gone wrong with you?' her mamma asked.

'Yes, mamma, everything has gone wrong,' Minnie answered, quickly and vehemently.

'My poor little Minnie! I am so sorry.'

The tender sympathy of voice and look touched Minnie even more than the words themselves. Tired and depressed with all her failures and disappointments, she could not keep back a few tears. She turned away her head to hide them.

'You see, mamma,' she said, after a few minutes' pause —— 'you know, mamma,' interrupting herself, 'I am as much obliged to you as ever for taking so much trouble with my amulet. But yet I don't think —— I can't feel —— it does not seem as if your rule did much good.'

'You have been trying to keep it, then?'

'Yes, mamma; indeed, I have tried all day. You saw how I tried this morning with George.'

'Yes, Minnie, I did see *how* you tried,' Mrs Grey said, with grave emphasis.

Minnie looked up quickly; but a sudden pang of conscience checked the flush of indignation. She

turned away again ; and again a few tears rose to her eyes.

‘Should you like to tell me about all your tryings, dear Minnie, and perhaps we might together find out the cause of their failure?’ Mrs Grey said, very kindly.

And Minnie, after a moment’s thought, began slowly and excusingly to go over the history of the day. She made herself as much in the right as possible. But she could not go calmly over the various scenes, without feeling conscious that she had not done quite well. And this consciousness prepared her to listen more patiently to her mother’s gentle admonitions.

‘Dear Minnie,’ Mrs Grey said, putting her arm fondly round her, ‘do you really think you have observed this command of God’s to-day? It is God’s rule ; you must not call it mine.’

‘Indeed, mamma, I think I have. It is what I have been trying to do all day,’ Minnie said, a little offended.

‘Have you remarked its strength, its strictness, dear Minnie? “Do ye also the same likewise.” “Also the same likewise ;” that must mean that we are to do the very thing that we should like others to do to us—the same thing in every respect, to the same extent, in the same way.’

Minnie looked gravely in her mother’s face. A new light was beginning to dawn upon her mind. Mrs Grey continued, drawing her little girl closer to herself, as if to soften the pain her words might give :—

‘Had you been in George’s place this morning, would it have been exactly an ungracious, grudging giving up of his seat that you should have liked from him? Had

you been in Ella's place, would a scolding, cross assistance have been exactly what you would have wished for? Had you been— But,' interrupting herself, as she saw Minnie's tears flow fast, 'but I have said enough. I see my darling sees her mistake.' And she fondly kissed the bowed-down head of the blushing, tearful child.

The entrance of the boys prevented any further conversation. Minnie ran up stairs to bathe her red eyes, and when she returned the family were assembled for prayers. There was no opportunity, as she had feared there might have been, for remark upon her quietness and gravity.

When Mrs Grey went up to Minnie's room that night, she found her in bed, but not asleep. Minnie's eyes were very wide awake, very full of thought.

'Oh, mamma!' she cried, turning eagerly to her mother as soon as she came in. 'You are quite right. I have been all wrong. But, mamma, how terribly difficult is that "also the same likewise!" It does not seem as if I could ever keep it.'

Mrs Grey sat down by her daughter's bed.

'Dear Minnie,' she said, 'have you ever looked into the inside of your amulet?'

'I opened a wee, wee bit, enough to see how prettily you had lined it with white satin,' Minnie answered, a little puzzled as to the connection between her own remark and her mother's question. 'I did not open it far, lest I should crush it.'

'You did not then see what is in the bag?'

'What is in it! No, mamma. It felt so flat and smooth, I did not think of there being anything in it.'

She had, while speaking, drawn the amulet from under her pillow, and did not require her mother's smiling "Look now," to make her, with eager curiosity, take out the velvet bag, and open it.

Inside was a little scroll of white satin, edged with a delicate gold fringe; and on it, in the small, distinct letters of the outside, embroidered, were the words, "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

Minnie looked up with bright intelligence to her mother as she read the words.

'Yes, my dear Minnie, that is the spirit of which the other rule is the manifestation. We must first love others as ourselves, before we can do to them in every respect as we should like them to do to us. If you have the one command in your heart, don't you think the other would soon appear in your conduct?'

'Yes, mamma, I see it now,' Minnie answered, thoughtfully, looking on the little scroll as she spoke. 'And yet, mamma, surely you do not think that I do not love George, and Ella, and them all?'

'No, my love, I do not think so. I know that God, in His goodness, has given you an affectionate heart, and has further given you such good, kind brothers and sisters, that you can hardly help loving them. But Minnie, dear, the love may be in your heart, and yet not in exercise. It may be alive, but not awake. Don't you think love for them was asleep this morning, when you were disobliging to George, and cross to Ella?'

'Ah! yes, mamma, I am afraid it was.' Minnie answered more frankly than she had yet spoken. 'If I had been really loving George at that moment, I

should have felt only sorry to see him so cold, and glad to know I could do anything to make him comfortable. And had my love for Ella been awake and active, the sight of her poor little mournful face would have made my heart sore. And although I might have been a little sorry to leave my work (for I think, mamma, I should always have felt a little sorry about that, I was so anxious to get it done), yet still, if my love had been all right, I should have laid it aside cheerfully, and given my help pleasantly. Ah ! mamma, you were very right to put this rule inside the bag. The outside rule can never be kept without this inner one.'

There was another pause. Minnie lay silent, looking at the white scroll with its golden words as she held it in her hand. Mrs Grey sat patiently waiting till Minnie should speak again. She did not wish to interrupt musings which she judged, from the softened expression of her child's face, were beneficial. At last Minnie looked up again, and spoke slowly and thoughtfully.

'Mamma, when I found out last night how much there was that I ought to do, although I was sorry that I had done so little of it hitherto, yet, with the sorrow was mixed up a kind of pleasant, hopeful feeling. I saw a great deal to do. But I saw the way to do it. But now, mamma, that it is something I have to feel; it does not seem that I can do anything to make myself feel the right thing at the right time. It is far easier to do to others as I would they should do to me, than to love others as myself. The love is so difficult. I don't feel as if I could ever get it, ever make myself feel it.'

Mrs Grey laid her hand upon her child's.

'Minnie, dear,' she said, earnestly and solemnly, 'I have once already reminded you that these rules are God's rules. And you know, my love, who has promised to write His law on our hearts, that we may not sin against Him. His word cannot fail, dear Minnie. He cannot lie. What a sure confidence, then, have we in asking Him to keep His own promise, and write His law, even this particular law, on our hearts, so that we may no longer sin against Him in this thing.'

Minnie looked up with a bright gleam of hope and comfort in her eyes.

'Mamma,' she whispered, 'will you ask God to do this for me,—to give me this love?'

Mrs Grey knelt by the bedside, and in a few simple words prayed that the Lord who had given His children this law, would Himself give them the strength to keep it. And she thanked Him for having taught them that they could not keep it without His teaching and help, and for having, in His great tenderness and love, given them so much encouragement to ask this thing from Him.

No more words passed between mother and child, except Minnie's earnest, tearful, 'Thank you, dear mamma,' as her mother kissed her. But Mrs Grey left the room that night far more assured than she had been the night before, that her trouble in making the amulet had not been taken in vain.

Nor was she disappointed. Minnie was not naturally very amiable. Before this night she had been apt to be disobliging to her elder brothers, and cross and

overbearing to the little ones. And these were faults difficult to root out, and often appeared again after she had believed them quite banished. But yet from this night Minnie was convinced, as she had never before been, that it was her duty to fight against them. From this night she never wholly gave up the contest, though perhaps sometimes cold and lazy in carrying it on. She wore the amulet constantly round her neck for many years, and it constantly reminded her of the resolution she had made when she first got it, of the way in which it had shown her her complete dependence upon God's help to keep God's law; and often, when her heart was cold and careless, and higher motives had for the moment ceased to influence her, the thought of her loving mother's care and anxiety for her welfare would come vividly before her mind at the sight of the amulet, and gratitude to her would arouse her again to earnest self-denial and self-watchfulness.

At first the improvement in her was so small, the progress she made in overcoming her selfishness so slow, that her brothers and sisters seemed quite unconscious of it. And often, when Minnie had striven hard to overcome her old enemies, she would be disheartened to see how little any one except her mother seemed aware of her striving. But the ready, tender sympathy of that good mother was a never-failing comfort and help. By her teaching, Minnie was led to look to God for sympathy as well as for strength, and she came to see that it was good for her not to have too much praise from her fellow-creatures, as she thus learned to desire more simply and purely to do His

will. And as time passed on, and she saw how much all her brothers and sisters, both older and younger, trusted to her for help and sympathy, how confident they had learned to be that Minnie would be interested in all their concerns, and ready to help them in all their difficulties ; then Minnie acknowledged that she had the sweetest rewards for all her efforts, and then with a thankful heart she would clasp her little amulet, and acknowledge the love and wisdom of the mother who had made it for her.



HOW TO BE HAPPY;

OR,

EVERY-DAY WORK FOR GOD.



Aunt Annie and her Home.



T was a lovely May day. The sun shone brightly and cheerily down upon the fair green earth. The beech-trees in the wood were looking their very best. The leaves wore their freshest, brightest green, and had still that soft silkiness which they keep for only a short time after bursting from the bud. Here and there were buds which had not yet got from under the covering of the hard scales which had protected them so well from the cold of the early spring, and their dark, red brown contrasted prettily with the brilliant green of the leaves near them. The branches were not so well clothed as to be able quite to shut out the sun, whose bright rays darted out and in among them, lighting up the smooth, grey trunks of the trees, and the patches of grass and moss on the ground beneath, and giving to the leaves among which they played, a brightness and beauty impossible to describe. The wood was full of living creatures, all rejoicing in the sunshine; and the twittering and the chirping of

some birds, the glad bursts of song from others, mingled sweetly with the soft hum of the various insects which danced up and down in the sunbeams.

Everything looked bright and cheerful except the little girl, Mary Drummond, who walked quickly down the path through the wood. She seemed to see nothing and to hear nothing of the pleasant sights and sounds around her, but walked straight on with a hurried step, a sad countenance, and eyes bent on the ground.

She crossed a stile leading from the wood into a grass-field where some sheep and lambs were feeding. Happy, comfortable-looking sheep and lambs they were in that sunny field. Winter snows and April sunshine and showers had helped together to make the tender young blades of grass spring up, which were not more pleasant to the eye than good for the food of the flock. It was now pretty far on in the afternoon, and the sheep, having eaten their fill, were lying down to rest. They started up as Mary came down from the stile among them. The grave old mothers moved off only a little way, and stood watching her suspiciously ; but the lambs, half in frolic, half in fear, scampered across the field, turning and winding about among the trees in a way that was very pretty to look upon. Mary saw it not. She crossed the little field with the same hurried step, anxious brow, and downcast eyes. A stile at the farther end brought her into a lane, a little way down which stood the cottage she sought.

It was but a small cottage, and yet it was the home of two families. On each side of the narrow entrance-passage a door opened into a single room. In one

lived a widow, Mrs Richardson, with her three children. In the other lived the old woman whom Mary had come to see, and whom she called Aunt Annie.

She was not Mary's aunt. She was no relation to her. But almost everybody called her Aunt Annie, because she was so good and kind,—so ready to love, help, and advise,—that every one felt as if she had really belonged to them.

Mary opened the door and went into the room; and such a bright, cheerful room it was!—very small indeed; so small that the little bed quite filled up one side of it—the side opposite the window. In the middle of the room stood a table, as white as hands could make it. Another long, narrow table stood against the wall behind the door, and above it were some shelves holding a few cups and saucers, and plates, one or two goblets, a tea-kettle, and a pair of brass candlesticks as bright as gold. The fireplace was opposite the door, and between the fireplace and the window sat Aunt Annie herself, looking so nice in her old-fashioned chintz gown and white apron, kerchief, and cap. It was a pretty window by which she sat looking out over sunny, sloping fields to the beech-wood of which I told you. On one side of the window-sill stood an ivy-leaved geranium, with its branches of delicate pink and white flowers; and on the other a Begonia, with its large, handsome, crimson-veined leaves. But neither pleasant fields nor pretty flowers could Aunt Annie see, for poor Aunt Annie was blind. Not so blind but that she could see light from darkness, could find her way about her house more easily than you could fancy

possible; and if a person stood between her and the light, she could see the form, though only as a black shadow upon a faint light. But she could not see the faces of those she loved, she could not see the beauties of God's world, and, worse to her of all, she could not read God's blessed book.

Many people wondered how the blind woman could keep her house so neat and clean. But she used to laugh in her cheerful manner, and tell them that where there was a will there was a way. When she was bending over her tables and chairs, or on her knees scrubbing her floor, it was wonderful, she used to say, how quickly she could see a dirty spot. And even if she did not see the cleanness and dirt, she knew well, she said, that if she went straight on with her scrubbing-brush, she must carry away all the spots and stains in the end. Aunt Annie thought that cleanliness and tidiness were Christian duties.

'God means His children,' she used to say, 'to try to give all the pleasure they can to every one who comes in their way. And although my poor old eyes cannot be pleased with the order, or hurt by the dirtiness, of my house, yet the eyes of others can; and for their sakes I am determined to see to it that everything about me should look pleasant and cheerful.'

Another curious thing about Aunt Annie was her power of knowing when any one was in sorrow. Before you could tell her what had grieved you, or that anything had grieved you at all, Aunt Annie seemed to guess it from the sound of your voice, ay, or even from the sound of your step as you came into the room, or

from your manner of opening the door. The secret of this power lay in the love of Aunt Annie's tender heart. She felt so much interest in every one that came near her, and was so anxious to help every one, that she had learned to watch for, and understand, little signs which other people never thought of observing.

When God made her blind, and left her alone in the world without kith or kin, she used to say it was because He wished her to be ready to help all His sore-hearted ones whom He put in her way. And when He had showed such love to her,—had washed out all her sins in the blood of His dear Son, and had given her His Holy Spirit to dwell in her heart, to teach, to strengthen, to comfort her,—surely it was the very least she could do, she said, to give her whole heart and mind to the one work He had made her fit for. And as she was blind, and had few things to distract her mind, so she knew, she said, that God meant her to think well about the best ways of helping His children, and bringing them to seek after Him. And many a joyful hour she passed, praying to God for those He had sent to her to be helped, and thanking Him for giving her so many to love, and to whom she could be of use.

To-day, as usual, she had known Mary's step even before she came into the house, and had known from the sound of it that the little girl's heart was sad. And so, before Mary had time to open the door and come in, Aunt Annie had found time to ask God to teach her to help and comfort the little girl whom He had brought to her for that purpose.

When Mary came into the room, she went straight up

to Aunt Annie, threw her arms round her neck, and kissed her without speaking. But there was something in the kiss which made her kind friend all the more certain that the child was in sorrow. She did not ask any questions, however, but waited until Mary should feel inclined to speak, and only thanked her very cordially for coming to read to her. Mary brought forward one of the little wooden stools, and taking up the large Bible which lay between the flower-pots on the window-sill, she said, in a wearied tone—

‘I must begin to read at once, aunty, for I have a very short time to stay.’

‘A very short time is it, dear?’ said Aunt Annie, in her pleasant, kind voice; ‘then read me the second chapter of Ephesians. I did feel a kind of longing,’ with a little sigh of disappointment, ‘to hear once more about the Lord’s appearing to Elijah in the mount. But if we have time for only one, I should like Ephesians best.’

Mary turned to the place and read. Her voice was low and trembling, even from the first. But when she came to read the precious words, ‘God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,’ it failed altogether; she burst into tears, and hid her face on Aunt Annie’s knee.

‘My child! my dear lassie!’ the old woman said tenderly, laying her hand on the girl’s bowed-down head, ‘what is it, Mary, dear? What has vexed you? Surely, darling, there was nothing in those heart-cheering words to make you cry.’

‘But that is it, dear aunty. It is that, and nothing

else,' Mary said, sobbing. 'Oh, aunty, God has loved me so much when I did not love Him, and has given His Son to die for me, and I can do nothing for Him. And I want so much to serve Him, and I can get nothing done ; and it is that which makes my heart so sore.'

'Nothing, Mary, dear ? Are you sure you can do nothing ?'

'Quite sure, aunty. From morning to night, from morning to night, I am driven about from one thing to another ; and it is, Mary, do this ; and, Mary, do that ; and I have not one moment to myself.'

'Poor child, poor child !' said Aunt Annie tenderly, stroking Mary's hair. 'But, Mary, dear, you told me that, after I had spoken to your Aunt Sally about it, she had always allowed you time morning and night for reading your Bible and prayer.'

'O yes, perhaps a little time for that she gives me,' Mary answered impatiently. 'But she keeps watching me, and the very moment I shut my Bible she begins : "Now, Mary, jump up, fill the kettle;" or, "Make the fire;" or, "Dress the children," or something. And there are so many other things I'd like to do for God. I like to have time to read to you, dear aunty, and sometimes to say a word to poor old Peggy up in the wood. And I wanted to teach a class in the Sabbath school, and Aunt Sally says she can't spare me. No,' with great bitterness, 'she can never spare me for any good !'

'But, Mary, dear, it shall all come in the Lord's good time,' Aunt Annie said, in her cheerful, contented way. Mary hardly seemed to hear her. She went on speaking quickly and earnestly.

‘I was so happy yesterday. I liked the sermon so much. It made me think so much about God’s love to me. And in the evening I got away for a long time into the wood, and read my Bible, and resolved to do God all the service I could, and prayed to Him to help me.’

‘And thanked Him and your aunt for allowing you such a quiet time, I hope,’ Aunt Annie said gravely. But Mary went on without answering :—

‘And then, when I got up this morning, I thought of so many ways of serving God ; and I was so anxious to go to old Peggy ; and all morning Aunt Sally kept me running about washing dishes and carrying water, and I don’t know what all. And I had resolved to learn a pretty hymn I had found in mother’s hymn-book, because I thought it would do me so much good to have it to say over when I was out with the children ; and when I was washing some clothes—for Aunt Sally has been washing all day—I kept the book near me, and tried to learn a verse now and then ; and because Aunt Sally thought I had not washed something quite clean, she got into a rage, and carried off my book, and locked it up, and bade me mind my business, and not take up my head with poetry and nonsense. Nonsense ! Oh, Aunt Annie, to call the hymn nonsense, and it all about God’s love to poor sinners !’

‘But perhaps your aunt did not know what it was, dear,’ said the old woman, excusingly.

‘But she did know that I was in a hurry to come to you, aunty,’ Mary answered ; ‘and she would not let me go until I had cleaned up everything after our

washing. And when I was ready to come away, she called me back, and kept me ever so long, because she said the floor was not half clean, and because I had not swept in the hearth. And if I am to be kept toiling and slaving the whole day long at work of that kind, and every minute busy, how can I do service for God? And I want so much to do it, and it makes me so miserable not to be able. Oh, aunty, aunty, I am so unhappy!' And the tears began to flow again, and again she bowed her head down on her kind friend's knee.

'Poor child, poor child!' Aunt Annie repeated again, in her kind, pitying tones; 'her heart is very sore. But it can't be otherwise. How can a child be happy who thinks she knows better than the Lord who made her, than the Lord who bought her?'

'But oh, aunty, I don't think that!' Mary cried in extreme surprise, looking up at the old woman. 'When did I say anything like that?'

'You did not mean to say it, dear, but you did.'

'But when? but how? Surely I never could.'

'Yes, dear,' Aunt Annie said solemnly; 'God says to you, "Here is the service I wish you to do for Me. This service is best for your soul and for My glory." And you say, "Not so, Lord, I know a better way of serving you than that."''

'But, aunty,' Mary interrupted eagerly, 'you don't understand me. It is because I have no time to do God any service that I am so full of sorrow. It is only Aunt Sally's service that I do all day long.'

'Ay, dear; but who put you under Aunt Sally's yoke?' the old woman asked quietly.

'She herself took me to be under it, I think,' Mary answered, a little sullenly.

'But how was that, dear?'

'Oh, aunty! aunty! you know well enough,' with some impatience, 'it was because dear father and mother died, and there was no one else to take me.'

'Ay, dear; and who took your father and mother away from you, and left you alone in the world?'

'It was God, Aunt Annie,' Mary said reverently.

'Wasn't it God, then, dear, that put Aunt Sally's yoke upon you?'

'I suppose it was,' Mary said, a little unwillingly. She began to understand what Aunt Annie meant.

'Yes, dear, it was,' the old woman said decidedly, but very kindly; 'and when He put it on, He meant you to bear it. That is the service He wishes you to do for Him, and it won't do for you to go and choose another kind of service, and then fret because you can't get it done.'

'But I don't see that altogether,' Mary said earnestly. 'It seems all service for Aunt Sally, not for God.'

'That is your mistake, dear. That is what made you so unhappy. God knows what is best for our souls, and most for His glory, and He takes good care to order everything so. When He sent you to your aunt's, He knew exactly how much work she would lay upon you, and exactly how much time you would have for other ways of serving Him. He knows from day to day, and hour to hour, all that comes to you; and you must just let your heart rest upon that, and do, with all your heart, the work He brings to your hand. You see,

dear, you wanted to go and seek work for yourself, instead of doing the work God gave you.'

'But surely, aunty, to come and read His Bible to you is more work for God than to stay and scrub Aunt Sally's floor?' Mary asked, thoughtfully.

'Not a bit more, dear. Indeed, it is not work for God at all, if it is not the work He has set you to do for the time. He certainly wishes you to obey and please your aunt; and if she wishes you to scrub the floor, the best service you can do for God is, to give your whole mind to scrub it as well as possible.'

Mary did not speak for some minutes; she sat with her arms crossed on Aunt Annie's knee, looking up and out of the window with a very thoughtful face. Aunt Annie did not interrupt her thoughts. She took up her knitting again, and waited patiently until Mary should be inclined to speak.

'Aunt Annie, I like that,' Mary said, after a time, speaking slowly and thoughtfully, 'if I could feel quite sure it was true. But, aunty, it seems strange. Is it really true that my nursing little Tommy, or washing up the dishes, or carrying water, or such like things, are all ways of serving God?'

'I don't ask you to take my word for it, dear,' Aunt Annie said. 'I give you the words of One who cannot lie. He says, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." He knows quite well what kind of things it is you have to do. It is He who brings them to your hand. And yet He says to you, "Whatsoever ye do." And if you can take the nursing baby, or the washing of dishes, or any of your

little works, out from under that broad word, "Whatsoever," you are wiser than I am.'

'But, dear aunty,' said Mary, eagerly, 'I don't want to take them from under it. It makes me so happy, it takes away all the soreness of my heart, to think that I may and ought to do to God all that hard work that I used to grumble over, because I thought it kept me from serving Him. Aunty, you have made me happy again.'

'Not I, dear; it is the Lord's word has made you happy. That word, and one more, are the best rules for happiness that I know. The other word is this, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."'

'Are these the things that make you always happy, aunty?' Mary asked, looking up into the blind woman's placid face.

'Ay, dear,' Aunt Annie said, smiling. 'It would be a sore thing for a poor blind body like me if I had to go and seek the best way of serving the Lord. It is the joy of my heart, dear, to know that I have only to sit still, and do what the Lord gives to my hand to do.'

'And so everything as it comes, from one minute to another, may be done to God. Oh, aunty, it is very good,' said Mary, earnestly.

'Ay, dear, but remember it is to be done heartily, not lazily, not carelessly, not heartlessly.'

'No, aunty,' Mary interrupted, laughing; 'heartlessly is not heartily.'

'It must be cheerily, diligently, thoughtfully,' continued the old woman, laying her hand on Mary's head,

as if to bespeak her attention. 'Don't spare your time, don't spare your trouble, don't spare thought and attention. It is to the Lord you do it; and no time, trouble, or thought, is wasted that is given to Him.'

'But now, aunty, I must finish the chapter for you, and go back to Aunt Sally,' said Mary, turning to the Bible. 'You have made me happy, and now I must give you a little pleasure;' and she began the chapter again. This time, when she came to the words, 'God, who is rich in mercy,' her voice trembled as it had done before. But now it was with gratitude and joy; and again hiding her tearful face on Aunt Annie's lap, she said, 'Oh, aunty, how rich in love to give me His Son Jesus Christ to save me, and then to say He'll let such as I am serve Him, even in little, every-day work!'

'Ay, dear, and to give you His Holy Spirit to help you in that every-day work, and to have Christ watching over you every minute to give you all the help you need. Read on, and see how God tells us that He fits us for the work,—'we are His workmanship,'—and that He ordains the work for us. When the work and the preparation for it both come from Him, surely they must fit each other.'

Mary read on to the end of the chapter, in the low, earnest tone of one who felt that each word was full of precious meaning. After she had finished, she sat with the open Bible on her knees musing. Aunt Annie touched her gently.

'Mary, dear,' she said, 'you must go home. If poor Mrs Rogers has been washing all day, she must want

you to help her with these three young children. You should go, dear.'

'I will, aunty,' Mary answered, rising as she spoke, 'and carry your two rules for happiness with me.'

'Yes, dear, do everything to the Lord, and thank the Lord for everything. If He brings you pleasant work, thank Him for the pleasure; and if He brings you painful work, thank Him for allowing you to go through pain for His sake.'

'And thank Him with my whole heart for giving me you to help and comfort me, dear, dear aunty,' Mary cried, kissing the good old woman, while happy tears again rose to her eyes. Aunt Annie returned the kiss with equal affection, and then Mary went away.

Very bright and beautiful did everything look in her eyes as she stepped out of the house, for Mary was now able to look round and feel the loveliness God had shed round her path. It was late in the afternoon, and the long lines of light from the sun low in the heavens, gave the landscape that sweet, peaceful look which is peculiar to an afternoon light. Mary felt the peacefulness go to her heart; and remembering Aunt Annie's words, 'Give thanks always for all things,' she blessed the Lord for His goodness in giving her eyes so many fair and pleasant things to look upon. The sight of the sheep and lambs recalled to her mind the twenty-third psalm; and as she repeated the words, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,' she thought—

'Ah, I had forgotten that, when I grumbled and fretted because I thought I had too little time to serve God, He says, "I shall not want;" and so I know I shall

never want time or ways of serving Him. He will take care I shall never want anything. Oh, how good He is! how full of love!' And again happy tears filled her eyes. Certainly the Mary Drummond who now walked down the beech-wood was very different from the Mary Drummond who had gone through it a short time before.

Mary's home lay just beside the wood. Her aunt, Mrs Rogers, was in the garden taking in the clothes which had been drying on the hedge. Mary went up to her and offered to help her; but Mrs Rogers recollected Mary's heartless, careless mode of working all forenoon, and she answered a little roughly that she could not trust her—that she would tear the clothes in twitching them off the hedge.

Mary felt a little mortified that her first attempt to keep her new rule should be so useless, but her conscience told her that she had deserved her aunt's mistrust of her carefulness; and instead of looking sulky, or perhaps giving back an impertinent answer, as at another time she might have done, she only asked gently if there was nothing else she could do.


'Yes,' said her aunt, more pleasantly, 'you can go and take up Tommy. He is lying in his cradle crying his very heart out for want of some one to divert him.'

Mary went straight to the house. The two little girls, five and three years old, were playing beside the door with daisies, buttercups, and dandelions, which they had gathered in the field near the house. Mary gave them a kind word and smile as she passed them, praised them for being good and quiet, and in a plea-

sant tone reminded Nelly, the eldest, that she should be kind to little Susan, and then she went in to the baby.

Poor little fellow, he lay in his cradle crying piteously. He had been left a good deal to himself through all the busy day, and he was quite tired of his own company—had altogether exhausted his own powers of amusing himself. He was very fond of Mary, and stretched out his arms to her as soon as he saw her. And she was fond of him ; and as she lifted him out of the cradle, and began to kiss him and make of him, she thanked God in her heart that her first work should have been so pleasant a one. The little fellow ceased crying almost immediately ; and when Mary danced him in her arms, and walked up and down with him, singing and talking to him, he laughed, and crowed, and kicked, and went through all a baby's ways of showing joy.

But now sounds of distress came from the little girls at the door. They had been making gardens, as they called it,—that is, sticking their daisies and buttercups into the ground, so as to stand up as if they were growing. Little Susan did not take so much interest in it as her older sister, and in her restless movements had pushed down a whole row of the flowers Nelly had with difficulty set up. Nelly gave Susan a push and a slap, and of course Susan cried. Mary must go to make peace. As she crossed the room to do so, Aunt Annie's words, ' Don't spare trouble, don't spare thought,' came into her mind, and she resolved to take good thought how best to settle the little ones right.



The easiest way of settling the business might have been to give Nelly a slap in turn, and carry the crying Susan into the house ; and at another time this might have been Mary's way, but she knew it was not the best way, and did not follow it.

' Oh, Nelly,' she said, in a grave but kind voice, ' I did not think you would have been so unkind to your poor little sister. She has not sense to know what you want her to do.'

Nelly hung down her head and looked ashamed.

' Come, kiss her, and make friends,' Mary went on, leading little Susan to Nelly. ' And, Susan, you, and Tommy, and I, shall go down to the meadow and gather such a heap of daisies and buttercups for Nelly's garden.'

Her manner was so cheerful and pleasant as to make both little girls think nothing could be so delightful as to go to the meadows with her. Nelly declared her intention of going also ; and the two, quite friends again, ran off hand in hand, while Mary stepped back into the house to put on Tommy's hood and wrap a shawl round him.

They were but little things she had done—pleasing a crying baby, and making quarrelling sisters friends ; but they had been the work God had given her to do for the moment, and she had done them to Him, and was happy. She sat down in the meadow, with Tommy creeping about at her side, and Nelly and Susan running up and down gathering flowers ; and while her hands were busy making daisy balls for the little ones, her thoughts were allowed time and liberty to think of

all that had happened through the day, and to thank God for the very precious lesson He had taught her. It was indeed most precious to feel that God would allow, nay, would command her to do every part of her daily work to Him, and would take it as service from her hand.

Mary was happy sitting there, praising God for all His love and goodness, and pouring out her heart in prayer, that He would help her to do all for Him. But she did not stay too long. She had seen her aunt go to the house with a large basket of clothes, which she knew ought to be folded down ready for to-morrow's ironing ; and the boys, Dick and Bob, were coming home from school, and their supper had to be got ready. So, with only one little sigh for the peace and quiet she was leaving, she took up Tommy and went to the house to help her aunt.

Poor Mrs Rogers needed help. She looked worn-out and troubled. She had been hard at work since very early in the morning, and yet her work did not seem half done. She was unwilling to leave her clothes as they were, and yet the children's supper must be got ready. Her face brightened when Mary came in, and offered to fold the clothes ; but she looked at the baby, as if unwilling to take his nurse from him. Mary answered the look.

' Oh, Tommy is as good as gold now,' she said cheerfully ; ' he'll play himself with the daisy balls on the floor, as happy as a king ; and I can look after him and fold the clothes too.' And without waiting to be told, she settled Tommy comfortably on the floor, with his bunches of flowers round him ; and, drawing forward

the little table used for the purpose, she began to fold the clothes with cheerful activity. She did as Aunt Annie had told her,—gave her mind and attention to the work, and went about it so briskly and cleverly that her aunt could not help admiring her.

Mrs Rogers was not an unkind or harsh woman ; but she had a hasty temper, and a naturally anxious and perhaps rather fretful spirit. As the mother of five children, the eldest not quite nine years old, she had cares enough upon her ; but she chose to add to them by her excessive anxiety about the perfect order and cleanliness of her house. A spot or stain made her quite uncomfortable ; and as, with so many young children, dirty marks were matters of frequent occurrence, her temper was constantly fretted and her labour increased by this too great desire for spotless floors, tables, and chairs. She had taken charge of the orphan Mary out of pure kindness and affection ; but having burdened herself and her husband with this additional charge, she naturally expected that Mary would, in turn, give her help in all her household work. This was perfectly just and right. The only mistake was, that she expected and exacted far more from Mary than a girl of her age ought to have been required to do. Still, she felt kindly towards her ; and as she saw how well and quickly Mary got through her work, and how pleasantly she talked and sang to Tommy all the time, Mrs Rogers' heart smote her for many cross words and looks given to the girl through the day ; and it was in a much kinder tone than usual that she called her to come to supper.

Before supper was over, the good-man of the house came home, and that was always a pleasant thing for every one. He was a kind, good-tempered, cheerful man, and always anxious to make every one happy. Mary was very fond of him, and knew well that after he came home the hardest part of the day's work was over. No one needed to look after the children while he was in the house. He was only too glad to keep the baby, to play with the girls, and to look over the boys preparing their lessons ; and the children were all so happy to be with him, that there was seldom any trouble with any of them while he was there.

After supper Mary cleared the table, and washed up the dishes, and swept in the hearth, without waiting to be told ; and did her work so well and carefully, with such active hands, and such pleasant, cheerful looks, that even her aunt, little given to praise, could not help saying—

‘ Well, Mary, you really are a clever, handy lassie when you choose. And now, go and help your uncle in the garden, for that is more to your taste than working with clothes, and you do deserve a little treat.’

And Mary was glad to go where she was sure of being kindly received, and of getting full praise for all the trouble and attention she gave. A good hour's work she did, and hearty was Will Rogers' admiration of her skill and industry. Then the children had to be put to bed ; after that, she took up a frock she was making for Tommy, and sewed at it busily until her aunt told her to lay it down and go to bed, as she had been early up in the morning, and had worked hard

all day ; and her voice and manner were kind, and even affectionate, as she said it.

‘ Ah, what a difference it makes to do everything for God ! ’ Mary said, as she lay down in bed, after a happy time of reading and prayer ; ‘ to feel that even the rubbing hard to make the table shine bright, and the taking care not to break or chip the plates and cups when I wash them, and to put them straight and neat on the shelves, are all ways of keeping His commandments, and doing heartily what He gives me to do. Ah, it is too much happiness !—it makes every bit of work so bright and pleasant ! ’

Mary’s first feeling on awakening the next morning was, that something very pleasant had happened to her ; and as she recollected what the pleasant thing was, she sprang at once out of bed, and began to dress herself quickly. This was a point in which Mary had often failed. Generally her aunt was obliged to call her several times before Mary made up her mind to rise. And as on this day she was so early ready as to be able to enjoy a quiet time for reading, her conscience whispered that she had not had any right to complain of want of leisure for duties of this kind, while she had every morning wasted at least a quarter of an hour half-sleeping in bed. To-day, the moment her aunt called her, she was ready to begin her part of the morning’s work, and was able to get through more than her own share. She was surprised to find how much her activity helped to make the whole family comfortable. Poor Mrs Rogers’ temper was often a good deal tried by the hurry and bustle of the morn-

ing's work ; and to-day, when Mary had relieved her of so much of it, she was far more kind and pleasant to every one.

This was to Mary even a more busy day than the one before. All the clothes which had been washed yesterday had to be ironed to-day ; and while they were hard at work, a message came from old Mrs Rogers, Will's mother, begging her daughter-in-law to come to see her, as she felt very ill. Poor Mrs Rogers looked despairingly at the heap of clothes still to iron ; but the old woman was subject to sudden and severe attacks of illness, and Aunt Sally was too good a wife to neglect her husband's mother. She resolved to go, and asked Mary if she thought she could get the clothes finished by herself.

'I think I can,' Mary said, but in a low, sad voice, and with a deep sigh ; for poor Mary had been working busily, hoping to get through her part of the work in time to pay Aunt Annie a nice long visit ; she did so long to see her, to tell her how well she had got on, and to thank her for her good advice. But now she knew that, even after her work was done, she should not be able to leave the house and the children during her aunt's absence. Slowly and sadly her iron went up and down. Her thoughts were far from her work ; and it was a very rough, ill ironed apron she hung up on the screen this time. Just then her aunt, who had been putting on her bonnet and shawl, looked into the room.

'Mary, dear,' she said kindly, 'I am going to take Tommy with me, so you won't have him to plague you ;

and if you get done in time, there is a drop of good broth in the can on the shelf there, you and the girls might take to old Peggy. Take her a good handful of meal too. She likes a drop of gruel, poor old thing.'

'Oh, thank you, aunt,' Mary said, gratefully; and she looked with remorse at the rough apron she had just put out of her hands. It was the only article Mary did not iron well that day; from that moment she gave her whole heart and mind to her work. It was the work God had given her to do for the moment, and she was bound to do it well. Hour after hour she stood at the ironing-table. Her back and her legs ached, and her wrist and elbow felt so tired, she sometimes thought she should not go on; but still she kept up a good heart and courage, and worked away diligently, carefully, and as cheerfully as she could.

At last the basket of clothes was empty, the screen of ironed ones was full. Mary made up the fire, put the room in order, removed her screen of clothes to a corner out of the children's way, and then found she had plenty of time to run up to Peggy's with the broth. So she called Nelly and Susan, and a pleasant walk they had through the wood.

Peggy was very different from blind Annie. She was naturally fretful and discontented, and she had not Annie's trust in God, to enable her to bear the pain, sickness, and poverty He had sent on her. She was seldom pleased with anything any one could do for her, and was little grateful for it. Mary could never have cared for going to see her; but Aunt Annie had con-

vinced her that this was a work God wished her to do.

‘She is old, and sick, and friendless,’ Aunt Annie had said; ‘and you are young, and strong, and happy; and when God brought you to live so near her, He meant you to do what you could for her.’

And so Mary was always glad to serve God by bearing Peggy’s ill-humour and ingratitude. To-day she had none to bear; Peggy was unusually pleasant. The broth was excellent, she said, and the very thing she had wished for; and the relish with which she finished it showed how much she enjoyed it. So amiable was the old woman to-day, that Mary ventured to offer to read her a chapter from the Bible; and although she made no remark, yet Mary thought she seemed to like it and be interested in it. Mary’s heart felt very happy to have got so pleasantly through this work, and heartily thanked God for it.

When she got home, Mary was very tired; and as it was not quite supper time, she was glad to sit down to rest, and to read a little book her clergyman had given her some time before, and which she had never had time to read. But little Susan was tired too, and very fretful; and Mary soon found that if she wished to do the work God meant her to do, she must put away her own book, and take the little one on her knee and try to amuse her. And she did it heartily, as to the Lord,—giving her mind to think what Susan would like, and telling her little stories out of the Bible, in such a pleasant way as to draw Nelly from her play to listen. And as Mary spoke earnestly and feelingly of God’s

love, and of Jesus Christ's tenderness to all, the hearts of both little girls were touched, and drawn to love God and to wish to know more about Him.

Will Rogers and his wife came home together. He had heard of his mother's illness, and had got early from work to see her; but she was much better by that time, and they were able to come home. Mrs Rogers was much pleased with Mary's day's work, and would not allow her to do anything more that evening, but sent her immediately after supper to see Aunt Annie, and told her she might stay as long as she chose.

Oh, with what a happy heart and light step Mary went through the wood and across the grass-field that afternoon! and how wondrously fair everything looked to her in the evening light! Aunt Annie was sitting beside the fire. She looked round with her bright, happy face, when Mary came in. Mary sprang into the arms opened to receive her, and kissed her again and again.

'Oh, Aunt Annie,' she said, 'you don't know how happy your two rules have made me! And, Aunt Annie, you can't think how much pleasanter the work itself is, now that I feel I am serving God in doing it! I quite liked my ironing this forenoon, and the feeling that I was doing it well, and the seeing how nice the clothes looked.'

'Yes, dear,' the old woman answered; 'it makes all the difference in the world to the pleasantness of our work, when we give up doing it as a hard task we are in a hurry to get done with, and learn to take it cheerfully as the work God gives us, and are anxious to do

it well for His sake. But now, dear, tell me all about what you have done.'

But as you and I, my dear little readers, know that already, we shall bid Mary good night, and leave her to tell her old friend her story at her leisure. And to you I would only say, Do try Aunt Annie's rules ; and whether you have to learn a lesson, to nurse a little baby brother or sister, to wash dishes, to sweep floors, or hem a handkerchief, try to feel that it is the very work God has put into your hands to do ; and do it heartily as to the Lord, and not to man. And if ever you feel inclined to be discontented with what God sends you, and begin to think others are happier than you are, then take up the other rule ; look round and see how many things you have to thank God for ; recollect that He knows what is best for you, and most for His glory ; and so see that you give thanks to God always for all things.



WHOM WILL YE SERVE?



A GENTLEMAN passing hastily through one of the crowded streets of the town, was detained for a minute at a crossing, by the passage of a long train of carts. Two lads stood near him, in earnest talk; and while he waited, he heard one say—

‘Well, I’d like famously to go. I’d like it of all things. But it would be wrong. I can’t, and there’s an end of it.’

“Wrong,” “can’t,” repeated the other, with a jeering laugh, ‘there you go; always the same story. You can’t do this, and you can’t do that; really, Ben, you are the biggest baby I ever saw. To see a fellow of your size let yourself be bound down and tied up like that. Before I’d be such a poor slave, I’d go and drown myself in the river.’

The gentleman laid his hand on the boy’s shoulder, and asked, gravely—

‘Are you quite sure that you are not the poorest slave of the two?’

The boys started, and looked round. Neither spoke. They were too much astonished. The gentleman continued—

‘Don’t you know, my lad, that there are only two

masters, who divide this world between them,—the great God, and His enemy and man's, the devil. Is it better to serve the good Lord, who so loved us as to give His Son to die for us ; or Satan, who hates us, and only seeks to ruin our souls to all eternity ?'

The lad called Ben looked up brightly into the speaker's face.

'Thank you, sir,' he cried, 'that heartens me to do right. It is better, nobler, happier, a hundred times happier, to serve the Lord who loves us, than the devil, who seeks to destroy us. Good-bye, Jack, I'm off ;' and without another word, he darted round the corner, and disappeared.

Jack looked after him for a minute, and then turned round to look at the gentleman, who had so strangely interrupted them. But he, too, was gone. He was in haste to catch a train, and had passed on as soon as he could. Jack rubbed his eyes.

'Queer that,' he muttered, 'where did the old fellow come from ? What did he mean ? I a slave, indeed ! I'd like to see myself one.' But still the words came back into his mind. He could not get rid of them.

Poor fellow ! he was one of those boys who are held back from giving themselves to God, more by an excessive love of freedom and of independence, than by any positive dislike to Him or to His ways. Jack was not ignorant of religious truth. For several years he had attended a Sabbath class, taught by an earnest, godly man, who laboured with his whole heart for the good of his scholars. Jack had been drawn to the class at first by gratitude to this man, who had saved

him from drowning at the peril of his own life ; and he had continued to attend, from the love and respect which his teacher knew well how to win. Once and again had his interest been awakened, and his heart touched, by the truths he had heard, and almost had he been persuaded to be a Christian. But ever had the dislike to being restricted and controlled come between him and his resolution ; ever had the proud determination to be his own master held him back from the right road. He had never known the blessedness of wholesome restraint, never learned obedience or submission. His mother, a widow, was a gentle, loving woman, without much sense or firmness. She had constantly said, that as she could give her boy nothing else, she was determined to give him his own way ; and his own way he had had all his life, until he had come to think that it was mean and poor-spirited to follow any other—to obey any master except himself. It had long been his boast, that no one had anything to say to him—that he did just what he liked, and when he liked, and was ruled over by no one. And now, was he to be told that he, Jack Man, the bold, the free, had all this time been a slave ; and that to a master who hated him, and sought to destroy him. The thought was not to be borne.

‘ It’s all humbug and nonsense,’ he cried aloud, ‘ I don’t, and won’t believe it ;’ and pressing his cap firmly down over his eyes, he started off, at a quick trot, towards his own home.

His thoughts were in a whirl ; and eager to escape from them, he hurried on without thinking where he

was going, when suddenly he ran up against an ill-looking lad, about his own age, who was leaning against the open door of a small public-house.

'Hallo, Jack,' cried the boy, 'what's the row? Where are you off for at that pace?'

Jack knew the boy, and sometimes made a companion of him for want of a better. But he had no real liking for his society at any time, and just now felt particularly unwilling to have anything to do with him. He would have passed on with a hasty, 'I didn't see you, Bob.' But Bob caught him by the arm.

'I say,' he said, 'come in here,' pointing to the public-house, 'and let's have a glass together. You can't think what famous stuff they have got just now.'

Jack, young as he was, had only too often gone into such miserable places, and taken a dram with his idle companions. But he had only done so, for the sake of showing that he was free to do what others did. He had as yet no taste for strong drink, and on this particular occasion not the least wish to go in. He drew his arm from the other's grasp, and said hurriedly—

'I can't go now; I must take home some money of mother's, that I've been getting for her.'

'Can't,' repeated Bob, as Jack had so lately repeated the same word, spoken by his friend Ben; 'why, have you joined the regiment of "can'ts" and "musts"? I thought you were a fellow who always did what you liked, and cared for no one.'

'So I am,' cried Jack angrily, and colouring.

'Come in then, there's a good fellow,' said the other; 'there's a chap in there singing such a famous good song.'

And Jack went in, to show that he was his own master, and under rule to no one. Bob called for a glass of spirits for each of them, meaning that Jack should pay for both. The glasses were brought. Jack was listening to the song. But it was one he had often heard before, and a stupid one besides. He did not care for it. His companion put into his hand the glass of spirits he did not want, and for which he must pay with his mother's hard-won money. The question flashed through his mind, Was it, then, such a grand thing to rob his mother, only that he might do what he liked? What he liked! Bitter as gall, sharp as an arrow, darted through him the conviction, that it was not what he liked, but what the devil liked; that he was robbing his mother, wasting money sorely wanted at home, wearying and vexing himself with things he did not care for, only to please and serve the master, the tyrant, who hated him, and sought to destroy his soul. He shuddered, and hastily set down the glass untasted. But the eye of his companion was upon him; and to avoid his sneers and ridicule, he caught it up again, and hastily swallowed down the contents. They burned his throat like fire; and bitter anger and self-contempt filled his mind as he asked himself, Where was the pleasure of such a draught?

Anger and self-contempt are no pleasant inmates of one breast. To escape from them, to forget them, Jack called for glass after glass, until his money was all gone, and his senses too. The keeper of the public-house turned the two boys out; and Bob, stronger-headed than Jack, guided his feeble, tottering steps to

his mother's house, and left him there. The poor widow received her boy without reproach, and helped him to get into bed, there to sleep off the stupidity of drunkenness.

It was far on in the night before he awoke. He looked out of the bed. There sat his mother, weary, pale, sewing at the feeble candle-light, a thin shawl folded round her to keep up a little of the heat that a fire ought to have given. Alas! the money she had set aside for coals, had gone to pay for Bob's whisky. Jack still felt stupid, and his head ached sorely; but he had sense enough to feel that it was to make up for the money he had wasted, that the poor feeble mother sat so late at work. And for what had he wasted it? To please the devil who hated him, and sought his ruin here and hereafter. He did not now think that the gentleman's words were humbug and nonsense; but groaned aloud, as he felt the pitifulness, the meanness, the misery of that state of slavery in which he was held.

His mother's ear caught the groan, and she rose at once to attend to him. She had tasted no food since breakfast-time, but for him she had prepared a cup of nice strong coffee. And she pressed him to take it with all a mother's loving kindness. Poor Jack's heart was by nature tender, and he was greatly touched. In no measured terms he abused himself for his conduct to such a mother, and made a silent vow, that from this day he would cast off, at once and for ever, the rule of that master who had made him such an undutiful son.

His vow was fresh in his mind next morning when

•

he awoke, and he set at once about fulfilling it. The first thing was to get work ; and in this he succeeded better than he could have hoped. His character for idleness was pretty well known in the town ; but he was also known to be a good-tempered, active, clever lad, who could work remarkably well when he chose. And a market gardener in the neighbourhood was willing to engage him by the week, and to keep him as long as his choice lay in the right direction.

In the beginning, all looked fair and promising. Heartily did Jack set about teaching himself obedience and submission ; boldly did he defy both the sneers and persuasions of his bad companions ; and resolutely did he resist every inclination to return to his old bad ways. He was greatly pleased with himself, and fancied that all was well,—that he had, at one decided stroke, set himself for ever free from the service of his old master. But alas ! poor Jack, so fair a state of matters could not last long. Satan does not so easily quit hold of his servants. As the novelty wore off, Jack began to tire of his new goodness. Old habits and faults reared up their heads again, and had to be overcome anew with every new temptation. Day by day duty became more difficult, new impossibilities stood in the way of performing it. One day it seemed impossible to keep down the disrespectful words which a hasty reproof provoked ; the next day equally impossible to resist a game of marbles, instead of going on the errand he had been sent. Now, he could not help leaving work for a day to see the races ; and again the temptation to spend his week's wages at the fair, was more than he

could resist. One hour, the oaths, which he knew to be sinful, forced themselves from his lips ; the next, in a passion, he said to his mother words which he afterwards blushed to recall. He did not forget the truth which had so impressed him, that in all these things he was doing service to the devil, who hated him, and sought to destroy his soul. Bitterly did he feel his own folly in submitting to such a master, and heavily did the chains of his slavery press upon him. But this hatred of his bondage could not free him from it. Nor could all his contempt for himself strengthen him to resist. His heart began to fail him. He almost resolved to give up the contest, and let Satan do with him as he would.

In this state he one day met his old friend Ben, and eagerly asked him if he knew who was the gentleman who had spoken to them on that memorable day, and where he could be found. Ben did not know. He had never seen the gentleman before or since.

‘I’d give the world to find him,’ cried Jack ; ‘I’d walk barefoot through the whole land to speak to him. He’d put me right, I know. He’d tell me how to get right.’

‘There’s your own Sabbath-school teacher,’ said Ben, ‘why don’t you go to him? He can put you right, if any man can.’

‘To be sure, and so he can,’ Jack cried eagerly. And, without a moment’s delay, he set off to his teacher’s house.

He found him at home, and was kindly received and welcomed. Frank and open at all times, great anxiety

now made Jack perfectly unreserved. He told his good friend all that had passed, and earnestly asked his advice and help.

‘I am such a poor-spirited fool,’ he said bitterly, even fiercely, ‘such a downright ninny, that though I know the devil hates me, and seeks to destroy me, I can’t keep from doing his bidding. Isn’t it the meanest, poorest thing in the world, to vex my good mother, to waste the money she so sorely wants, to anger my kind master, and lose a good place, only for the sake of pleasing him, when I hate him, and he hates me?’

‘Poor boy,’ said his teacher kindly, ‘don’t you see that you have forgotten one thing that your good friend said?’

‘What is that?’ Jack asked eagerly. ‘Sure, I remember every word.’

‘Ay, but you don’t think of it all. He told you that there were only two masters, who divided the world between them. Now, you have tried to shake yourself loose from one master, without putting yourself under the other.

Jack looked puzzled. His teacher explained,—

‘You have tried to give up pleasing and serving the devil, because you feel that he hates you. But you have never thought of giving yourself to serve the God who loves you.’

‘Ah, sir,’ Jack said, with a hopeless smile, and shake of his head, ‘if I haven’t pith enough, if I am not man enough to get quit of the one, how can I ever get further still, and make myself serve the other?’

‘How did you ever expect to get pith enough in

yourself to get quit of the one ?' was his teacher's grave answer. 'Don't you know that Satan must be far stronger, far wiser than you? How did you ever expect to be able to cast off his chains in your own strength ?'

'True, sir, true, I needn't have thought of it,' Jack said hopelessly.

The teacher had opened a little Bible, and was turning over its pages.

'See here, Jack,' he said; and he pointed to the 21st and 22d verses of the 11th chapter of Luke: "When a strong man armed keepeth his house, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil." Do you know, Jack, who the strong man is, and who is the stronger than he ?'

Jack studied the passage for a few minutes, and then, looking up with a brightened face, said—

'The strong man must be the devil, sir; the stronger man, the Lord in heaven.'

'Right, my boy. And don't you see that, if you give yourself to the Lord to be His servant, you must have His strength on your side, to free you from Satan's slavery. He has said, Greater is He that is with you, than all that can be against you. Give yourself first to the Lord, and then go boldly on to do battle with your old master, the devil, feeling sure that the battle is not yours, but the Lord's.'

Jack heard him with eyes flashing with eagerness, and with quick-coming hope.

‘Oh, can I give myself to the Lord?’ he cried.

‘He will most certainly give you grace and strength to do it, if you ask Him,’ said his teacher. ‘Shall we kneel down now, Jack, and I will pray to the Lord to help you?’


Jack assented, and they knelt down. But the boy’s heart was so deeply stirred, his anxiety was so great, that he could not wait for another’s words. As they knelt down, he lifted his head, and clasping his hands, cried aloud—

‘O Lord, make me Thy servant. O Lord, Thou knowest I cannot get quit of Satan’s service ; I cannot, I cannot. O Lord, help me.’ And tears burst from his eyes, and rolled down his cheeks, while he repeated again and again, ‘I cannot, but do Thou help me.’

A prayer so earnest, so sincere, comes from the Lord alone. He it was who had opened the eyes of the poor, thoughtless lad, to see his dangerous state ; He it was, who, by His Spirit, made him thus pray ; and the prayer He had given, He heard and answered. From that day, from that hour, a new life began for poor Jack ; and although many were his faults, many his backslidings, from that time the desire of his heart was to serve and please the Lord, who had so loved him as to give His only begotten Son to die for him.



WHERE ARE YOUR SINS?

H, mother,' cried little Maggie Glen, as she ran into her father's cottage one day, after school, 'you know they say that Miss Emma is very ill, dying;' and the little girl hid her face in her mother's apron, and cried as if her heart would break.

Mrs Glen looked surprised.

'Sure not, child,' she said; 'why, she has been on the sofa again all this week. You must have made a mistake.'

'No, no,' cried Maggie, through her sobs, 'I saw Mrs Woods herself, and she said there had been ever so many grand doctors there to-day, and that they had said that she could not get better, that she was'—— Maggie could not again say the terrible word, but buried her head deeper in her mother's lap, and gave way to a fresh burst of tears.

'Ah, poor lamb, poor lamb,' said the motherly Mrs Glen, 'is it really so? And she so stout, and well, so little a while ago, out gathering cowslips with you in the meadow!'

'Oh, don't, mother, don't!' cried Maggie. She could not bear to hear of these happy days, which could now never come back.

Her distress drew her mother's attention more to herself. She took her in her arms, and caressed and soothed her.

'It is sore for you to part with her, I know,' she said, fondly, stroking Maggie's hair on her forehead.

'It isn't that, mother,' Maggie said, raising her head, 'it isn't that; I'm sorry enough to lose her. But, mother, the worst is that Miss Emma doesn't know God, nor Christ; and how can she die?'

'Thee doesn't know, child,' Mrs Glen said, reprovingly; 'thee shouldn't judge.'

'But I do know,' Maggie said, her tears checked by the very earnestness with which she spoke; 'we have talked about it often and often, and Miss Emma always said that she didn't want to think or to hear about these things: she said that it was no use, while she was young and well,—that it would be time enough when she got old. And now she is dying, and there is no one to tell her.' And again Maggie's voice was choked by tears.

Mrs Glen could say nothing to comfort her. She knew that Mr and Mrs Burton were godless persons, that they could not teach their child, and that the likelihood was that they would keep from her every one who could. They did not know for themselves the necessity of making peace with God, while still in this world, and would not feel any anxiety for the child's eternal safety. Most probably they would think only of keeping her happy and at ease about herself, so long as they could. Before Maggie could speak again, her father came in. He looked compassionately at his little girl.

'She has heard it then?' he said.

‘Yes,’ answered Mrs Glen. ‘But is it true? It seems so quick, so sudden. Is there really no hope?’

‘There were two doctors down from London to-day,’ he said, ‘and they told Mr Burton that it is a galloping consumption. They said that there was little hope of her life. But with such a young thing, no one can tell. They did not say that there was no hope.’

Maggie did not hear this little bit of comfort. She had felt unwilling to hear the bad news told over again, and had slipped quietly out of the room so soon as her father began to speak. She went to her own bed-closet, and having shut the door, she knelt by her little bed, and began to sob out the story of her grief to that Father in heaven, whom she had learned to believe cared for all her sorrows and joys. After a little she grew calmer, and was able to ask God for what she so greatly desired; that He would teach her dear Miss Emma to love Christ, and to go to Him for salvation. The prayer quieted and comforted her, and she rose from her knees with a peaceful, resting feeling that she had put the matter into God’s hands, and that He would see to order it all aright.

At supper, her father and mother, out of consideration for her, said no more about Miss Emma, but talked of other things. Maggie said little, and heard little. Her thoughts were full of the God who heareth prayer, and of the petitions she had asked of Him. As she ate her bread and milk, she sat opposite their pretty window, with its rich clusters of china roses. And she looked out at the blue sky, at the slanting lines of light upon the barks of the trees, and at the brilliant shining of

the setting sun upon the river, some distance below their cottage, and felt glad to know that the God who had made all things so bright and good, was the God who had promised to hear and answer prayer.

Maggie Glen and Emma Burton had been constant companions through nearly all their lives; and in spite of the difference of their ranks in life, they had been very dear friends. Emma had neither brother nor sister; and as there happened to be no children among the families of the neighbouring gentry, her father and mother had been glad to allow her to find a playmate in the well-trained, well-behaved, little daughter of their gardener, William Glen. The Glens' cottage stood within Mr Burton's park, not far from the house; and Emma having early scorned the protection of a nursery-maid, had been allowed to run down there alone whenever she pleased, to get Maggie to walk or play with her. Every spot near the cottage had some connection with Emma in Maggie's mind. Here was the old oak tree, up whose shattered side there climbed the earliest honeysuckle. There was the sunny bank where were to be found the finest violets and primroses. Here was the ruined gateway, where a pair of chaffinches had built every year, since Maggie had been old enough to look for nests. And there was the hedge where they had been used to seek the long wreaths of bind-weed, with which to adorn each other's hats. It was sad to see such things in all their old beauty and brightness, and think of her dear friend shut up in a sick-room, weary, suffering, and most probably dying.

Some days passed on, and still the accounts of Miss

Emma were very much the same. She was no better, and as time passed on there seemed less chance of her recovery. Sometimes, when Maggie heard the daily accounts, she felt greatly afraid and cast down. At other times, child-like, she began to get hopeful, to feel sure that Miss Emma could not die, that the doctors must have made a mistake. But always, whether hopeful or fearing, she kept praying to God, to teach her dear friend to know Himself before He took her out of the world. If she could know that Emma had learned to put her soul into Christ's hands, to be saved by Him, she thought she could bear patiently to part from her. The terrible thing was to fear that she was dying, a stranger, an enemy to God, and that the companion whom she had so dearly loved, whom she recollected so bright and happy, was to go away into never, never-ending misery.

In the meantime, Emma had often asked to see her old play-fellow. But her mother always found some excuse for not sending for her, or, by promising that she should come another day, tried to quiet her little girl for the time.

One day, when Emma was more than usually eager, and Mrs Burton was trying to divert her mind to other things, her father came to Emma's assistance.

'Send for the child,' he said to his wife; 'I am sure it must do Emma more harm to fret so about it, than to see her little friend.'

Mrs Burton turned hastily, and made a sign that she wished to speak to him. He followed her into the next room.

‘I cannot let Emma see that girl,’ she said, earnestly, so soon as she had shut the door. ‘You do not know her so well as I do. The father and mother are among the very religious set of people. They are always talking about these kind of things. They have made the child quite like them. She will be talking to Emma about dying, and going to heaven, and all that kind of thing.’

‘Let her,’ Mr Burton said, in a low, decided tone.

‘I cannot,’ she repeated still more vehemently. ‘I cannot have my poor darling’s mind unsettled, and made unhappy. All we can do for her is to keep her happy while she is with us.’

‘Emma,’ Mr Burton said, laying his hand upon her arm, and looking fixedly at her. ‘We have been content that our child should live without God; can we be content that she should die without Him? Let her learn what she can about these things. Better that she should be made unhappy here, than— He stopped a moment, then added, in great emotion, ‘hereafter for ever.’

He said no more, but left the room at once; and sent their good housekeeper, Mrs Woods, to fetch Maggie.

As you may fancy, Maggie was delighted by the summons. And, in pleasure at the prospect of seeing her dear friend, she forgot for the moment that friend’s state, and the fear that she would not recover. But when she was taken up to Emma’s bed-room, and saw her so lately merry play-fellow lying weak and weary on the sofa, and saw the small, thin hand Emma stretched out to her, and heard her feeble voice,

Maggie's heart sunk within her, and she could not keep down her tears.

Emma looked eager and anxious. When first told that Maggie was coming, she had asked to see her alone. But when her mother had positively refused to leave her, she had given up the point. Poor child, her heart was too full of what she wished to say, to care much who heard her. She began upon it at once, almost before Maggie could come up to her sofa.

'O, Maggie,' she cried, 'I wanted so much to see you. I wanted to ask you, do you remember that day we went to gather cowslips on the meadow ?'

Maggie's 'Yes, Miss Emma,' was scarcely to be heard through her tears.

'And when it was too hot, and we sat down under the trees, do you remember what we talked about ?'

'No;' Maggie's thoughts were too much confused and bewildered, between pleasure at seeing her dear Miss Emma again, and grief to find her so ill. She could remember nothing. Emma tried to recall the scene.

'We talked about dying,' she said, speaking very fast. 'You said that you were not afraid to die. I said that I was, that I could not bear to think of the dark, cold grave, where we were to be left all alone;' and she shivered as if a cold wind had suddenly blown upon her.

'My dear child,' Mrs Burton said, 'don't talk of such things, don't distress yourself; you will make yourself ill.'

'Oh, hush, hush, mamma,' cried Emma in great distress. 'Let me speak. It has been on my mind all these days and nights. It is keeping me from speaking that makes me ill.'

And her father gently drew his wife aside, saying,
'Let her speak. Let them say what they have to say.'

Emma had turned again to Maggie,

'Don't you remember now what you said?'

'Yes,' Maggie answered, 'I said, that if I were going to be afraid to die, it would not be for these things; but for the account that we must all give to God for all the sins we have done against Him.'

'You said,' Emma broke in eagerly, 'that every one sin we had ever done was kept in mind before God, and that we must answer for every one. Oh, Maggie, was that true?'

'For every one,' Maggie answered, in a low, solemn tone.

'But how, then, can you keep from being afraid?' Emma asked, almost breathless with eagerness and anxiety.

'Because my sins are all taken away,' Maggie answered promptly. 'I have not to answer them now.'

'But how? But why? Where are they taken to? Has God forgotten them? Speak quick, Maggie.' And Emma sat upright on the sofa, as if she could thus sooner hear the answer.

'No,' Maggie said solemnly, 'God never forgets.'

'Where, then, are they gone to? What has become of them? Tell me, oh, tell me. I want to get mine put away too.'

'Jesus Christ has taken them all away from me, every one of them,' Maggie answered, her whole face lighting up with joy. 'He has set them down to His account, and has borne the punishment for every one,

instead of me. He is to answer for them. I have nothing to do with them any more.'

Emma looked at Maggie, as if she did not know how to believe such a great and glorious truth.

'But how do you know? Are you sure?' she asked.

'Quite sure, because God has told me in His word,' was Maggie's confident answer.

'But for me?—for my sins?' Emma asked tremblingly. 'Will Christ do that for me?'

'To be sure, He will. Oh, believe that He will,' cried Maggie.

'But how can I know? How can I be sure?'

'Because God has said that Christ came to die for sinners; and you know this, Emma, you and I are sinners.'

Emma sunk back upon her pillows, with a look of satisfaction.

'It makes me happy to hear of that,' she said: 'for oh, Maggie, all this time I have been thinking, and thinking, about that terrible account being kept of every one of my sins. If I could only feel sure that Christ would answer for them, I would be quite happy, —quite, quite happy! But if, after all, God should bring them up against me. That is the fear.'

'Oh, but that can never be,' cried Maggie, pressing closer to Emma, in her earnestness. 'God tells us that He so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son to die for us. He tells us that Christ has been wounded for our sins, has been bruised for our iniquities. You can't think that God, who so loved us, would punish Christ instead of us, and us too. He says that He has cast all our sins behind His back, and

that they shall never more be found. And God can never lie.'

'No, God cannot lie!' said Emma, her face brightening. I don't know much about God, for I have been very wicked, and never cared to hear about God. But I can't help feeling that He cannot lie. It was feeling that, that made me so afraid before. I knew that if He had said that He would remember all my sins, He must keep His word; and it made me, oh, so wretched.'

'Yes, God must keep His word,' said Maggie. 'But His word to us is, that Christ has died for our sins, and that we are to be saved through Him.'

'That is the only thing that could make me happy,' said Emma. 'But I should like to see it for myself, to be sure that God has said it.'

Maggie looked round for a Bible. But, alas! that poor, forlorn sick-room did not contain one copy of the blessed word. When Mr Burton understood what Maggie wished for, he went to the library and got one for her. While he was gone, Mrs Burton tried to persuade Emma not to talk any more.

'Only let me see these words, mamma,' she said, 'and then I shall be quite happy.'

When Maggie got the Bible, she turned to the passages she had quoted.

'See here,' she said: "'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'" And here again: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Emma read the words eagerly, the tears filling her eyes as she read.

‘ Yes, I see,’ she said, laying down her head again, ‘ it is God who says it, and it must be true. Oh, Maggie, I am happy now. I wished so much to know where your sins had gone to.’

Maggie was not allowed to stay longer with Emma at that time, but she was sent for every day during the few weeks poor Emma lived ; and many sweet talks the two children had together of that Saviour who had died for them and taken away their sins.

Mr Burton helped them to be together as much as they could, and saved them from interruption or disturbance. And even Mrs Burton was willing that Maggie should come, when she saw that Emma was more peaceful and happy after every visit.

As the end drew near, Emma asked that Maggie might stay with her always ; and she was allowed to do so. Again and again, through the last day, Emma thanked her friend for having taught her how she could get her sins put away from her ; and, about an hour before she died, she turned her dim eyes upon Maggie, and said,

‘ Oh, Maggie, how happy I am ! I am going before God, to give an account for every one of my sins ; but I have only got to say, that Christ has taken them all to Himself, and that He will answer for every one of them ; and I have nothing, nothing to do with them any more for ever.’

‘ They shall seek them, but they shall not be found,’ whispered Maggie.

And these were the last words that passed between the little friends.

THE CHILD'S OFFERING.



LEWIS, I think you did not attend much to the reading of the chapter this morning,' Mrs Grahame said to her little boy, one day after breakfast.

'Not to all, I daresay, mamma,' he admitted.

'And why not to all, my boy?'

'Why, you see, mamma, it was a pretty long chapter for a boy like me to listen to all through. And then'—He hesitated.

'And then?' she repeated gravely, waiting for an answer.

'And then, it was not quite about things for me, you know,' he said, with a little hesitation. 'It was all about the sacrifices and burnt-offerings that the Israelites had to give. We have nothing to do with offering up bullocks and sheep upon God's altar.'

'And have we no offerings to make to God, my boy?' Mrs Grahame asked seriously.

'Have we any, mamma?' he said, surprised; 'I didn't know that we had. I don't know what they are.'

'Do you remember where Peter speaks of our offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ?' answered his mother.

'Yes, yes, I recollect now,' he cried. 'Papa explained

that to me. He told me that we had offerings of praise to give to God. And I remember, too, last summer, when Caroline had been so very ill, and was getting better, a gentleman came to ask papa for a subscription for a missionary in some bad part of the town, and papa gave him a good deal; and when the gentleman said that it was more than he had expected, papa said that he was so glad to give a thank-offering to the Lord for His goodness in making Carry well. That was like the thank-offering of the Israelites, mamma, was it not?’

His mamma assented, and the little boy went on eagerly,

‘And I remember that, when Caroline could not go to the boating party, because it was her hour to read to blind Sally, and cousin Annie laughed at her for giving up so much pleasure for such a reason, Caroline said, “Shall I offer to the Lord of that which costeth me nothing?” Her reading to blind Sally was her offering, was it not, mamma?’

‘A very small offering indeed,’ Caroline said, blushing to hear her kind deeds spoken of.

‘But, mamma,’ pursued Lewis, ‘all that is very well for papa, and an old girl like Caroline. But what can a little boy like me offer to the Lord? I have no money, and there is little work that I can do for God.’

‘Don’t you remember that we are told that to obey is better than sacrifice? Cannot you, little boy as you are, make to God an offering of obedience to His commands?’

'To be sure, and so I can,' he cried eagerly, 'and I should like to do it.'

'And had you listened to the chapter read this morning, you would have heard how jealous God is of any blemish or defect being found in the offerings made to Him. The Israelites were to give to the Lord the best of their flocks and herds. Must not we give Him our best obedience? Must not we be careful that there be no defect, no blemish, or stain in what we do for His sake?'

'Indeed, yes, mamma,' he cried, 'I should like my obedience to be without blemish.'

'I suppose we should all like that,' Caroline observed quietly, 'if only it could be without too much trouble to ourselves.'

Mrs Grahame was called away, and Lewis began to gather together his school-books, and to pack them into his satchel; Caroline went on with a letter which she was copying for her father. After a minute or two, Mrs Grahame looked into the room again.

'Lewis,' she said, 'poor Willie has lost his slate. Will you help him to look for it? He is such a bad seeker, he never can find anything for himself.'

'Oh, bother,' cried Lewis impatiently, 'I can't waste my time seeking for all the things he chooses to lose. He is the most careless monkey in the world.'

'I wish you would help him,' his mamma persisted; 'I cannot just now, nor can Caroline. She must finish papa's letter.'

'Let him help himself then,' Lewis said very crossly. 'I am in a great hurry; I must see Charlie Bell before school about our cricket match.'

Mrs Grahame had been obliged to go away while he was speaking, and could not again ask him to help Willie. And having packed up all his books, Lewis was running out of the room, when Caroline caught him by the jacket as he passed her.

'Dear Lewis,' she said persuasively, 'don't you recollect God has said, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you?"'

'Well, that's all very well,' he answered impatiently; 'but one can't be always doing that, you know.' And he freed himself hastily from her gentle grasp.

He could not, however, get away from her words. They kept in his mind, and would not leave him at peace. He walked quickly to the front door, but stood with his hand on the lock. He could not get quit of the feeling that God was now demanding from him an offering of obedience to His command. He was afraid to refuse it. He turned from the door.

'I suppose I must,' he muttered. And then in a loud, cross tone, called to Willie, who was coming down stairs, 'Where had you the slate last, you little fool? I never saw such a plague as you are.'

Willie, very humble, and sorry to give trouble, tried to recollect in which room he had been doing his sums on the previous evening. But, before he could make much out of his confused recollections, Lewis had found the missing slate in the hall, under a heap of cloaks.

'There it is for you, you careless monkey!' he cried, flinging it at Willie, without much care for the safety of either the slate or the child's head. 'Take better care

another time;' and throwing open the house door, he ran down the steps, and off to school.

He fancied that he ought to feel well content with himself for having made an offering of obedience to God. But he could not. And as the words, 'without blemish and without spot,' came into his mind, he felt sadly that his grudging spirit had cast an ugly blemish upon his trifling act of obedience.

'I wish that there were something else for me to do,' he thought. 'I wish I could find another offering to make to God. I would take care that it should be without blemish. But I have only to go to the class; for a long time, for more than five hours, I shall have no offering to make.'

Then it occurred to him that God had commanded him to be diligent in business; and he comforted himself with resolving to make an offering of obedience to God in this thing, and to take care that it should be a very perfect one.

Very diligent and attentive he was, through all school hours; and as he was strapping up his books to leave school, he smiled to himself, and thought,

'Yes, I think I did that very well indeed. Surely that was an offering of obedience without blemish.' But he checked himself suddenly, even while the words were in his mouth; for he could not help recollecting, that a good deal of the credit of his attention and diligence must be given to his wish to get above Charlie Bell, between whom and Lewis there was a great rivalry both in lessons and games. To get above Charlie had been a stronger motive than to obey God. And here

Lewis saw that a blemish had been cast upon his offering of obedience.

He had no long time to think over the matter. His name was loudly called by the other boys from the play-ground. The cricket match had to be arranged, and Lewis hastened out to help in the consultation. All was settled ; the honourable post of bowler given to him to his intense delight ; and the game was going to begin, when a message was brought him, that his mother desired he should come home at once, instead of remaining for an hour, as he was generally allowed to do. It was certainly a trial to the little fellow, and he did not bear it well. He grumbled, and growled, and complained loudly of the hardship of being forced to leave his game ; accused his mother of unkindness in sending such an order, and should most certainly have disobeyed it, if he had dared. He went home as slowly as he could, rather hoping that his delay might cause his mother some inconvenience ; and when he made his appearance before her, he looked as cross and sullen as a boy could look. His conscience smote him when he found that he had been sent for, because his father had proposed to take all the children to see a panorama which Lewis had been most anxious to see, and which Mr Grahame had found out was to be exhibited for only that one day more. Lewis felt that he had not deserved to have his wishes so recollected and cared for, and he wished that he had come home in a more pleasant and dutiful spirit. He tried to drown self-reproach in the pleasing thought, that he had at least been able to make another offering of obedience to the

Lord. But this delusion could not last above a minute or two. He could not help knowing that he would not have obeyed had he not been afraid to do otherwise ; and that, at any rate, his growling and grumbling must have cast a black stain upon an obedience however little forced. He felt disappointed with himself, and humbled.

‘I don’t understand it,’ he thought. ‘I fancied that it would be so pleasant to take pains to keep my offerings to the Lord free from all blemish and stain ; and now I find I cannot. I think it must be because all these things have been mere every-day work. If I had any work really to do for God, I am sure I should find it easy to make it perfect.’ And he set himself earnestly to seek for such work.

It was not long before he found it. At dinner, Mr Grahame mentioned that an old man, whom they all knew well, was very ill,—dying, the doctor feared. He had always been a careless, godless man ; and Mrs Grahame asked anxiously, if he had any one with him who was likely to lead him to think seriously of his state before God.

‘I saw him this afternoon,’ Mr Grahame said ; ‘and when I spoke about these things, he listened more patiently than I could have expected. I wish I could see him again to-night ; but I cannot, and I have no one to send. You must not go out with that cough, and Caroline is away. It is a great pity. If there were only some one to read a chapter in the Bible to him, it might do him good.’

‘Couldn’t I do that, papa ?’ Lewis asked ; ‘mightn’t I go, mamma ?’

His mother gladly consented, and Lewis was greatly pleased. Here was an offering to make to God of the very kind he had longed for, and he set himself earnestly to make it as perfect as he could. He was very diligent and attentive in learning his lessons, that he might have more time to give to the old man. He consulted anxiously with his mother as to what chapter it was best to read; and he took great pains to read distinctly, and in a pleasant voice, so as to catch the old man's attention and interest.

He thought that he did very well. He believed that now, at least, he had made an offering to the Lord without blemish. And, again well pleased with himself, he was willing to tell his mamma how sorely he had failed in his efforts.

'I did not know that it would be so difficult to keep the offerings without blemish,' he said; 'and I was much disappointed. I had almost lost heart, and resolved to give up trying, when this thing came to be done. But in it I really succeeded. Don't you think so, mamma?'

Mrs Grahame hesitated.

'Don't you think so, mamma?' he asked again, more eagerly. 'Oh, mamma, do you see any blemish even in that?'

'I don't, Lewis, dear,' she said tenderly; 'I should like to think that all was right; I should not like to judge you hardly. But from your tone of triumph in telling your story, I cannot help feeling a little afraid that you may have thought too much of pleasing yourself, and not enough of pleasing the Lord.'

'I don't understand you,' he said, a little pettishly. 'I am sure it was not to please myself that I gave up my new book, and went out to read to James.'

'Was it not to enable you again to think well of yourself?' his mamma asked gently. 'You remember, do you not, that you used to say that, while cousin Annie helped others for the sake of showing how good she was, our Caroline helped them only because she loved them, and wished to make them happy?'

'Yes, mamma,' he said, in a low tone. He began to understand what she meant.

'And might it not be so with you to-night, my dear boy? When you went to read to James, did you feel simply desirous to serve God, and to help the poor old man to know what God required of him? Was there not mixed up with that desire a pretty strong wish to show yourself how good you were, and how well able to offer a perfect offering to the Lord?'

Lewis bowed down his head without answering. But the bright scarlet in his cheeks, and the saddened, humbled look in his eyes, answered for him. There had been a dark blemish of self-seeking, self-glorying in his work for God. After a minute he looked up again, and said sorrowfully—

'Mamma, it doesn't seem to have done me a bit of good to learn that God desires our offerings to Him to be without blemish. I seem only to have done worse than ever before.'

His mother smiled.

'You remind me of yourself when you were a very little boy, Lewis,' she said. 'You were one day very

busy turning over some old dusty pieces of wood, in the dark closet, at the end of the passage. And when you came in here, into the bright sunlight, you cried out, 'Bad sunshine ; make my hands dirty.'

Lewis smiled at his own folly, but did not seem quite to understand the application of the story. His mamma explained,

'You have to-day, for the first time, brought your poor, imperfect obedience into the light of God's perfect law,' she said; 'and when you see how far short it falls of what God requires, you are inclined to think that it is your knowledge of God's wishes that has made it so bad. You do not see that it has all along been as defective, only you did not know it.'

Lewis looked thoughtful, and did not speak for many minutes ; then, laying his head on his mother's shoulder, he said softly,

'It was very sore to learn it, mamma; it made me unhappy. But now, I think, I can be a little glad. It is better to know how far wrong we are, even though it does make us uncomfortable and unhappy.'

'Yes, better, far better,' she said, kissing him tenderly ; 'because, when we see how unable we are to do the thing rightly, then we are driven to go to God to seek strength to make us able. And you know, Lewis, dear, He has said, "He that seeketh shall find."'

'Yes, mamma, and I think I shall now seek for more than I have ever done before.'

GEORGE AND ALICK.



WELL, you know, Annie, it is all very well to try to be kind to and help nice people—people whom you like. It is the nicest thing in the world to help you, Annie, because you are always so good, and kind, and gentle. But there are people to whom I never could be kind, let me try ever so much.'

'But, Georgie,' his sister began.

He interrupted her with some impatience.

'Oh, I know what you are going to say. You always say that we ought to like everybody. But that is nonsense. Everybody is not likeable, and I don't like people who are not likeable; and I never shall, and never can.'

'I did not mean to say that. I don't always say it; I don't think I ever said it,' she answered quietly. 'I know that one cannot like people who are not likeable. But, Georgie,' with much earnestness, 'I know, and you know, that it is God's will, that it is God's command, that we should be kind, and tender, and gentle, and pitiful to every one, whether we like them or not.'

Yes, George did know that. Often had he been reminded of it. But as this was a command he often broke, he did not like to think of it. He moved rest-

lessly and impatiently on his chair, and said, with some fretfulness,

‘Well, but how can one; at least how can a rough boy like me? You can, Annie, I know. You do. Although you are confined to this stupid bed for weeks at a time, you do more good, and make more people happy and comfortable, than any one in all the house. You are so good. It is easy for you.’

‘No, George, it is not easy for me,’ she answered, her sweet pale face flushing at his praise. ‘I am not always kind. But a thought came into my mind about a year ago, that has always helped me a great deal. I think God must have put it into my mind. Indeed, I am sure He did, it has helped me so much.’

‘And what was the thought?’ George asked eagerly.

‘I was thinking how difficult it was to feel kindly, to feel rightly towards those whom we don’t care for, who are not pleasant; and then it came all in a minute into my head, that we should find it much easier if we could only remember ever and always that everybody we meet must be either God’s friend or God’s enemy.’

‘But how could that help?’ George asked, knitting his brows, as if greatly puzzled.

Annie tried to explain.

‘You know,’ she said, ‘that there are no two ways about it,—that we must either be God’s friend or His enemy.’

‘Yes,’ he answered thoughtfully; ‘papa made me see that long ago.’

‘And every boy you meet is either the one or the other, whatever else he may be, nice or not, pleasant

and likeable, or unpleasant and unlikeable. If he be God's friend—if he be a boy who loves our dear Lord Jesus Christ,' she went on, with an earnestness of feeling which brought tears to her eyes,—‘a boy whom Christ loves, and for whom He died—a boy that Christ cares for, and is ever watching over, and in whose troubles and pleasures, joys and sorrows, Christ is tenderly concerned—oh, Georgie, if he be Christ's friend, must not we like to be kind to and help him, to do him as much good and as little harm as we can?’

‘Yes, yes, I see,’ he answered softly, and with much feeling. Annie went on.

‘And if he be a boy who does not love God,’ she said solemnly, ‘then must he be one of the wicked, with whom God says that He is angry every day. And oh, Georgie, think what it must be to have God angry with you every day; to go through the world without God, never to think of Him with love; to have no God to serve, no God to care for you, never to have your troubles made easy by knowing that the loving God has sent them, never to have your joys made sweet because they are His loving gift. Oh, Georgie, how dreary, how desolate! Can you help being pitiful to any one who is in such a state?’

‘No, O no,’ was said by George's eyes even more earnestly than by his tongue. He said no more; for boys cannot speak of what they feel so readily as girls. But Annie's thought had gone deep into his heart, and as he went a few minutes after down toward the village on an errand for his father, his whole thoughts were occupied by it. Much more soberly than usual did he

walk down the avenue, thinking over again all that Annie had said, and praying earnestly that God would keep it in his memory, and bring it strongly before him each time he had occasion to use it.

Such occasion was close at hand. As he came out of the gate into the road, he saw, a little way before him, a boy who, as he feared—nay, rather, as he knew—was one of those wicked of whom Annie had been speaking. His name was Alick. Poor fellow, he was a cripple; he had been a cripple from his very babyhood. He had never been able to put his feet to the ground, to walk or run about like other boys, but could only get along slowly and painfully by the help of crutches. He was, besides, very delicate, and often suffered violent attacks of pain in his back and limbs; so that every one must have felt sorry for him, had he not been such a bad, cruel, selfish boy, that anger often drove pity away from the softest hearts. But there was this excuse for him, he had never had any one to teach him better. His mother died when he was a baby. His father was very rich, but was a coarse, hard man—one who, like the unjust judge, feared not God, nor regarded man. He was fond of his poor boy, who was his only child; but he showed his fondness by indulging his every wish, and suffering him to do in all things exactly as he pleased. So that Alick grew more and more wicked, cruel, and selfish every year, until he had come to be disliked and avoided by every one who knew him. George had a particular dislike to him. For Alick, knowing that George was far too brave to strike a cripple who could not help himself,

took the greatest pleasure in teasing, and provoking, and working him up into passions which George could not vent upon him.

The two boys saw each other a good while before they met, and Alick had time to prepare a taunting speech which he knew would be particularly provoking to George. But George also had time to think of Alick, time to recollect what Annie had said about the utter dreariness of going through the world without God; and God, answering George's earnest prayers, caused this recollection to move his heart to the tenderest pity and concern for poor Alick. So when the mocking, provoking speech was given forth in the bitterest way, George's only answer was a look of tender, even of loving compassion.

Alick misunderstood George's feeling. He thought that look was meant to express pity for his infirmities, and pity on that account he could not bear. His cheek flushed crimson with anger, and he poured forth a volley of fearful oaths and curses upon George, who was now passing him upon the opposite side of the road. Again George only answered with that look so strangely full of deep, tender pity, that Alick's heart was stirred by it, he knew not how nor why. He felt half provoked, as if he were being cheated out of his anger, and taking up a small stone from the old wall against which he leaned, he threw it at George, hitting him pretty smartly upon the arm. George took no further notice than merely to turn round and walk backward, so as to be able to watch for and avoid future compliments of the same kind. Many such were sent after him without

effect. But just as he was getting beyond reach, Alick, in a last violent effort to throw far enough, overbalanced himself, one crutch slipped from under him, and he fell forward on his face in the mud.

In an instant George was by his side, helping him to rise, and asking tenderly if he were hurt. He was covered with mud from head to foot, his face was sorely cut and bruised by some sharp stones lying under the mud, and his teeth had cut through his upper lip. George raised him into a sitting posture, and did all he could for him. A little burn ran by the way-side. George dipped his handkerchief in it, and kneeling beside him, tried to wash away the mud and blood from his face with the utmost tenderness and gentleness, saying all the time words of kindness and concern, and giving him those looks of deep, wistful pity.

At first Alick submitted to his kind offices without speaking; but after a few minutes he turned his head from him with a fretful, impatient, 'There, that 'll do,' and stretched out his hand for his crutches. George brought them to him, and helped him to get upon them. But poor Alick had severely sprained his shoulder, in trying to save himself as he fell, and the attempt to use his crutches gave him the most violent pain. Selfish boys are never manly. They always think too much of their own troubles. This new pain, and the fear that he should not be able to get home, were too much for Alick. He gave way to a most unrestrained fit of crying. At another time George would have been either provoked or amused at the big boy's crying thus like a baby. But now the pity

God had planted in his heart swallowed up every other feeling. He thought only of comforting and helping him.

'Oh, don't cry,' he said encouragingly; 'I'll get you home, never fear. See, sit here a minute, and I'll run for Annie's garden-chair, and wheel you home in it.' And having seated him comfortably leaning against the wall, he ran off, and was back with the chair before even the impatient Alick could have expected him.

It was not easy to drive the chair through the soft mud, where hidden stones were constantly turning aside the wheels, jarring George's arms, and calling forth bitter complaints from the fretful Alick. But George bore complaints and jarrings with equal patience and kindly good humour; and as the homes of the two boys were not far apart, he got Alick safe to his own door in no very long time.

The next afternoon, when George came home from school, he heard from his mother that the doctor had been there to see Annie, and had told them that Alick was very ill. He had sprained his back as well as his shoulder, and was suffering great pain, and must, the doctor said, be confined to bed for many weeks. George felt very sorry for him.

'Sickness and pain are bad enough,' he thought, 'even when one can feel that it is our good and loving Father who has sent them; but what must they be to him?' And he asked his mother's leave to go to see if he could be of any use to Alick. His mother consented, and resolutely turning his mind from the cricket-match just beginning in the school-yard, George went.

He found the poor boy in a pitiable state. His face was swelled from the effect of the cuts and bruises; one eye was quite closed up, and the other he could only open a little way, for a minute at a time. He could not turn himself in bed,—the sprained arm was bound to his side; he could do nothing to amuse himself; and in that motherless, sisterless home, there was no one to devise amusement for him. His father was kind and anxious about him; but it never occurred to him to sit by his bedside, and try to make the time pass pleasantly; and even if it had occurred to him, he would not have known how to do it. All that money could buy Alick had in abundance; but tenderness and kind companionship were what he most wanted, and these could not be bought.

He seemed pleased to see George, and gladly accepted his offer to sit for a little with him and read to him. George read aloud very well, and with great spirit, and Alick was delighted with an amusement which was quite new to him. The hour George was allowed to give him passed most delightfully; and when George rose to go away, he was eagerly asked to come back the next day.

The next, and the next, and many succeeding afternoons, George spent by Alick's bedside, reading or chatting to him; and when he was able to use his arms, playing with him at chess, draughts, or any such game that Alick liked. That tender pity which God had put into George's heart for the poor wicked boy, he kept fresh and warm from day to day; and George never grudged the time or trouble which he gave to

Alick; never lost patience with him, however fretful and unreasonable he might be, but was ever ready to do what Alick wished, whether he himself liked it or not.

One afternoon they had played for a long time at a favourite game of Alick's, but one which George thought very tiresome.

'Well, that is one of the nicest games in the world,' said Alick, stretching himself back upon his pillows when the game was done. 'Isn't it? Don't you like it?'

'No,' said George, looking up with an amused smile; 'I don't like it much.'

'Why, then, did you play so long without saying that you did not like it?' Alick asked, much surprised.

'Because you like it. I wanted you to have what you like,' George answered simply; and having put away all the things, he stooped over Alick and asked him very kindly,—nay, I may say, very lovingly,—if he thought he should have a better night, if he thought his pain was less than it had been.

'Yes,—no,—I don't know,' Alick said, looking earnestly up into George's eyes. 'But, George, I say, why do you care so much?'

'Because I am so very sorry for you,' burst from George's very heart.

'You well may,' muttered poor Alick, glancing down at his useless, shrunken limbs. But this time there was no anger in his thoughts.

'It is not for that, not at all for that,' George cried eagerly, as if guessing that pity for his infirmities might be painful.

‘For what, then?’ Alick asked, looking at him keenly.

‘Because you do not know, you do not love God,’ George answered with deep feeling. ‘Oh, Alick, how heartless, how dreary it must be!’ And the tears rose to his eyes, and ran down his cheeks, without his knowing it.

His words, spoken in that tone of intense pity, thrilled Alick to the heart. This was the meaning of all those looks of tender, yearning compassion, which George so continually cast upon him. And was it, then, such a terrible thing not to know God? George’s ‘how heartless, how dreary!’ sounded again in his ears, and seemed to answer the question. He said nothing to George nor to any one; but all night long these words came back, and back to his mind. He could not get rid of them. They were pressed down into his heart, by the recollection of all that exceeding tender pity which George’s eyes had so long expressed for him, and of George’s loving, patient kindness during his illness. And ever deeper and stronger grew the sense that his life was in truth, and ever had been, more heartless and dreary than George could imagine.

Next day, when George came to his bedside, Alick looked him full in the face, and said—


‘George, can you teach me to know God?’

You may imagine how George’s heart leaped with joy at the question. Often had he longed to speak to Alick of his God and Saviour, but hitherto he had been afraid to do it; not afraid of what Alick might say to or of him, but afraid to hear him speak against

the Lord whom he had so often blasphemed. Now his mouth was opened, and in simple, boyish speech, he poured out his heart to Alick, and told him all he knew of Christ's love in taking upon Himself the sins of those who were His enemies. And God's Spirit going with the words he taught George to speak, Alick's heart was touched, and the poor boy was brought to take Christ as his Lord and his God.

THE ANSWERED PRAYER.



T was Marion's first communion. She had this day joined herself, for the first time, to the visible Church of Christ.

Marion was the child of godly parents. Her father was a faithful minister of the Gospel; and both he and his wife had bestowed the greatest care and attention upon the religious training and education of their children; labouring with affectionate, prayerful earnestness, to impress upon their minds and hearts the precious truths of the Gospel, and watching constantly and carefully over every development of character.

And their labour had not been in vain. The eldest of the family, a married daughter, had been, from early youth, a decided follower of Christ. One after another, as they came to manhood, three sons had given good evidence of having really experienced a saving change of heart; and now, the father, with heartfelt joy, had admitted Marion, his youngest child, to the table of the Lord.

It had been a matter of surprise to many of their religious friends, that Marion should have reached the age of nineteen before she came forward to this ordinance. In their eyes, she had been fit for it long before.

Her outward conduct was blameless, her temper subdued and amiable, her knowledge of religion far above her years ; and she had long shown a warm interest in serious things, a love for the people of God and for His ordinances, and an earnest zeal in His service.


Two years before this, Marion herself had proposed, without fear, or doubt of her preparedness, to make this open profession of her faith. Her father had examined her ; had been satisfied with the clearness and distinctness of her knowledge,—satisfied, too, with the account she gave of her own feelings. For Marion knew perfectly what she ought to feel, and sincerely believed that she did really feel it. As far as man could judge, her thoughts, words, and actions, were all governed by deep religious principle ; and there seemed no reason to doubt that she was indeed prepared for the solemn ordinance of which she wished to partake.

But before the communion time came, a great change took place in Marion's mind. The veil fell from her eyes, and she was made to feel the difference between head and heart knowledge ; made to feel that it was one thing to know *about* Christ, another thing to know Him as her own, her only Saviour ; made to feel that she might have a sentimental, natural, what I might call an earthly love to Christ, as to One who was dear to all she loved, One who would provide for her present and eternal welfare, but that it was quite a different thing to love Him for His own exceeding loveliness, to have her will subdued to His will, to be made willing to be *nothing*, so that He might be all in all ; she was made to see that an amiable, natural disposition was

quite a different thing from that new heart, without which none can enter the kingdom of heaven.

The dangerous illness of her youngest brother Charles, was the means of awakening her to a sense of her real state. He had, like Marion, mistaken a perfect knowledge of the way of salvation, for a submission of heart to that way, for a humble walking in it. Because he knew perfectly how a man must be saved, he had supposed himself sure of salvation ; because he understood thoroughly all the offices and work of the Saviour, he believed that he had taken Him to be his Saviour. He had naturally a determined will, a great deal of quiet resolution ; and through all the temptations of his school life, he had calmly and constantly held on his own way of adherence to the principles he had been taught at home, unmoved by the ridicule or persuasions of his school-fellows. And this had naturally increased his self-confidence and security. He saw that not one of his companions had the same delights in the ways of holiness that he had ; that the services of the Sabbath, and reading the Bible, in which he found real pleasure, were wearisome and distasteful to them ; and he mistook a habit produced by a religious education and a natural tenderness and refinement of feeling, for evidences of a renewed nature.

But now, when sudden sickness came upon him, when death seemed very near, and he thought he must soon stand before the presence of God, he found that all his righteousness in which he had trusted, was as 'filthy rags,' and he had no other righteousness to put in its place.



At first he tried to conceal his anxiety of mind from every one around him ; but as his convictions increased in strength and liveliness, he was unable to bear the weight alone, and confided to Marion the state of his mind.

She was greatly surprised. She had always looked on Charles as a more advanced Christian than herself, as one about whose safety there could be no doubt. And at first she was inclined to impute his fears to the weakened, suffering state of his body ; and she set herself to speak peace to his soul, and to assure him that his alarm was groundless. But he rejected all her consolations with impatience.

‘ You say that *my* Saviour will answer for me,’ he exclaimed ; ‘ but I tell you He is not, He never has been, *my* Saviour. I rejected and despised Him in the days of my health, and made a Saviour for myself, of my knowledge, my good thoughts and feelings ; and now He rejects me. I seek after Him night and day, but I cannot find Him ; and how can I believe on one I do not know ?’

Marion was silenced. There was a reality, a depth in his feelings, that she knew nothing of ; and the anxiety she had at first felt about her brother’s state, began to extend to her own.

What did she know of feelings like these ? What was her sense of sin in comparison to his ? And what kind of faith in the death of the Son of God for sin could that be, which brought so little sorrow or shame for her own sinfulness ?

What had she ever known of the Christian conflict ?

As long as she could remember, her inward life had been one of unbroken peace and confidence. She had sometimes felt a vague, restless anxiety, when her daily devotions, the Sabbath services, or her meditations in her solitary walks, had seemed to have too little influence upon her heart, when she had felt less than she thought she ought to have felt. But, on such occasions, she had generally succeeded in working herself up to what she considered a proper warmth or earnestness; her self-complacency had returned; and in the spirit, if not in the words, of the Pharisee, she had thanked God that she was not as other men were. And she had never experienced that sense of her own helplessness, of her own depravity of heart, which was now overwhelming Charles with despair.

What influence, she now began to ask, had her religion had upon her daily life? The exceeding love and tenderness of her parents had made all her duties so pleasant to her, had so carefully guarded her from temptations to sin, that she had never found much difficulty in keeping in the right way. And in any occasional call to self-denial, love to these parents, and the desire to please them, had been strong enough to make her do right. But she could not remember that love to God, or a sense of His authority over her, had ever been the motives of her actions or efforts.

In the regulation of her affections and wishes, she had always followed the dictates of her own heart, without any reference to God's word or will; and because these affections were for the most part amiable, she had been well satisfied that all was right.

She knew well that she ought to love the Creator more than the creature ; and because she knew it so well, she believed that she really did so. Sometimes she had striven hard for patience under disappointment, for confidence and trust in God in times of trial, and had been well pleased with her own struggles, and with her success. But she now asked herself why she had thus striven ? And the answer was, that she might preserve her own self-complacency, or might get rid of the torment of impatience, of anxiety, and mistrust. And so, the further she looked into her own heart, the more closely she examined its past history, the more deeply convinced did she become, that she had been deceiving herself with a name to live, while she was spiritually dead ; that she had never until now known herself, known God, or the true way of salvation.

While her mind was thus gradually opening to a true sense of her condition as a sinner, Charles was gaining, by slow but steady degrees, a knowledge of Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour. It pleased God to restore him to health of body and peace of mind. Not to that false peace he had once rested upon, but to a sure and well-grounded peace,—a peace which flowed from the knowledge of his own death in trespasses and sins, and of the full and perfect life in Christ.

Marion did not so soon get deliverance from her fears. She passed through a long, dismal period of darkness. She laboured for months at the useless toil of endeavouring to awaken herself to a new life, of endeavouring to make herself know, feel, believe ; and it was not until a year and a half had been so spent,

that she was brought to see that in her 'there was no good thing,' that she could not of herself 'think one good thought, but that in Christ there was all fulness.' In her own words, she laboured hard for eighteen months to take her soul, and put it in Christ's hands, before she was taught to lie still, and let Him take it, and save it in His own way.

For months after these truths were first savingly impressed upon her mind, Marion experienced a joy, a peace, a liveliness, and warmth of feeling, far beyond anything she had ever before dreamed of. Her heart overflowed with love to her Saviour, with desire for His glory, and with an intense anxiety for the spiritual good of all around her. She seemed, as she often said, to live in a new world; a new beauty and glory seemed shed upon all God's works of nature and of providence, as well as of grace; and a new delight over all her duties, over all the circumstances of her lot.

During this time, she looked forward with earnest expectation to the time when she was to enjoy the privilege of sitting down at the Lord's table, and many and fervent were her prayers for a blessing.

One thing she particularly sought for,—that she might be abased in her own estimation, in order that Christ might be exalted. And as the time came nearer, she added another request that her will might be wholly brought into subjection to the will of God; that she might submit entirely to His sovereignty in all things, and be contented to learn the especial lessons He, by His providence, or by the working of His Spirit, called upon her to learn, whether it were agreeable to her

own wishes or not ; to be contented with the measure of comfort or joy He might see fit to grant.

And now the solemn services, so long looked forward to, are over, and Marion is returning home, saddened and cast down. During that ordinance from which she had expected such a blessing, her mind had been a dreary blank. Not one feeling of love to Christ, not one pang of godly sorrow for sin, had visited her ; but all had been dead, and cold, and dark.

She could not understand it. Why had she been so disappointed ? Why had God refused to hear her earnest prayers ? Her heart was bowed down with sadness ; she felt herself humbled in the very dust. But she was not in despair. No, she was still able to cleave to Christ, still able to rest her whole soul upon Him, to trust her salvation entirely to Him. Only she mourned in bitter grief of heart, that she was able to give Him so very little in return, that He should find so little fruit in her cold, thankless heart.

During the services on the Sabbath evening and the Monday forenoon, her sadness was increased, because the preacher on both these occasions dwelt much on the necessity of using for God's glory and the good of others, that increase of grace, that quickening of the affections, which they had received in the blessed ordinance they had so lately attended. And Marion felt that to her no such increase, no such quickening, had been vouchsafed.

She felt, too, that she had never stood more in need of fresh life and strength, because duties of a new kind were now before her. Her married sister was at

this time in very bad health. Her mother had been staying with her the greater part of the summer; and now, as it was not convenient for her to be longer from home, Marion was to take her place. Marion was always glad to pay a visit to her sister, whom she dearly loved, and she was very fond of her little nephews and nieces. But, in her present humbled state of mind, she felt afraid of undertaking the charge,—afraid of not fulfilling faithfully the duties she would be called upon to perform,—afraid of not bearing properly the little trials of temper and of patience, to which she knew she must be exposed in her new office of governess to so many high-spirited children.

And at first she did find her new occupations somewhat irksome; she did feel that, in her present state of mind, she would have greatly enjoyed the uninterrupted quiet of her mornings at home. When she was so anxious to examine closely into the state of her heart, to understand her own feelings, to quicken her cold affections, it was a trial to find her whole time, from morning to night, filled up with so many varied and pressing occupations.

She could not at first bring herself to feel any interest in the long, wearisome lessons she was called upon to listen to. With her mind filled with such important thoughts,—longing, as she did, to arrange these thoughts, and to clear up the oppression on her heart,—she found it very difficult to attend to this little boy, as he blundered through his dry grammar rules, or long columns of spelling; to that little girl, who could not be made to understand the rule by which her sum must

be worked ; or to their incessant questions and observations in their daily walks. And it must be confessed that, at first, these duties were not very faithfully performed.

She was first made aware of this, by seeing that her sister was beginning to exert herself more than she ought to do, and that she did not trust to Marion to do everything for her and for the children, as she had when Marion first came. When once her attention was directed to the subject, she saw that her present duty to God required her to give her whole mind to the new duties now laid upon her, and to be scrupulously faithful in the performance of them.

A new spirit from henceforth pervaded all her occupations ; and as she laboured earnestly to do every little thing to God, and to do it perfectly for His sake, she was surprised at the spiritual quickening and peace which came into her own heart. God gave her also a blessing on her work. She had the happiness to find herself a real comfort to her sister, and of much use to the children. Now that she was earnestly watching for them, she found frequent opportunities of interesting her pupils in the best things, and of influencing them in the right way. And now that she allowed her mind to dwell upon the peculiar trials of her sister's state, her heart was more ready to sympathize with her ; and God gave her many a little word of encouragement and comfort to cheer the sufferer in her hours of pain and depression.

As she saw all this the more clearly, so did she come to understand the more fully the mistake she had at first made.

‘Ah,’ she thought, ‘how often do I need to learn the same lesson! I have been again vainly trying to think good thoughts of myself, to work myself up to right and holy feelings. I have been again forgetting that Christ is made to me sanctification as well as justification. O Lord, how tenderly hast Thou dealt with me, in so gently teaching me my error.’

Her mind was now so fully occupied, that she remembered less frequently, and less vividly, the disappointment she had met with at the communion, although the thoughts of her unanswered prayer still rested like a weight upon her heart; and she often looked back with regret upon all the bright expectations she had formed of the blessings she had hoped at that season to receive.

One Sabbath, after she had been a few weeks with her sister, the whole circumstances were recalled to her mind by a sermon she heard on the subject of the answer to prayer. She listened with eager attention, while the preacher enlarged, in the first place, upon the full assurance which the word of God gives us that our prayers will be answered; and, in the second place, upon some of the causes for an answer being denied.

Neither of these heads quite met her case; but he went on, in the third place, to address those who were conscious they had prayed in all sincerity, with a humble faith, and for those very things which God had promised in His covenant to grant; and yet they had got no answer. To them, he only said, were they sure that their prayers were not answered? Did they re-

collect exactly what they asked for? Did they recollect clearly what answer they had expected? Or had they watched carefully for it? These were questions he advised them to ask, in the retirement of their own rooms, and they might perhaps find that an answer had been given, but that they had failed to perceive it.

‘Can that be my case?’ thought Marion; and she longed earnestly for an opportunity to examine herself, and find out if this could really be so.

But that opportunity could not be immediately. The little tribe gathered round her with question and remark, as soon as they left the church. Her brother-in-law was from home, so that there was no one to attend to them but herself. She remembered the lesson she had so lately learned, and, setting aside for the present her own wish for solitude, she applied herself diligently to the task of making the Sabbath both pleasant and profitable to her young charge, carefully framing her instructions so as to please and interest each, according to their respective ages, capacities, and natural dispositions. Any one who has ever tried, will confess that this is no easy task,—not a task to be gone about with a preoccupied mind, but one which requires all the attention and consideration of the teacher.

At last all her duties were over. The very little ones had gone to bed, the elders were all provided with suitable books or occupations; and Marion found herself at liberty to seek the retirement of her own room, and to begin the self-examination she so earnestly wished for.

The preacher had asked first, if she could remember

distinctly what she had prayed for. Yes, she remembered perfectly. It had been, that she might be abased in her own estimation, and that Christ might be exalted. The second question, What had she expected to receive as an answer to this prayer? was not so easily answered. A greater exertion of memory, a more strict inquiry into her past feeling, was necessary, before she came to understand clearly what had been the real tendency of her hopes and wishes. And what had she expected? Such a visible increase of humility, such a strengthening of faith in Christ's finished work, and such a quickening of every grace resulting therefrom, as should yield her a comfortable evidence that she was in the right way,—as should make the Christian conflict less arduous,—such as should, in short, enable her to rest in her own attainments, to draw food for hope and comfort from her own evident growth.

This was what she had expected, and this she certainly had not received. What, then, had been given her? She had been made to feel, in bitter reality, the coldness and hardness of her heart; she had been made to understand fully the meaning of these words, 'Dead in trespasses and sins,' 'harder than the nether millstone,' and 'altogether unfruitful;' and she had been convinced of her own inability to soften, quicken, or renew her insensible nature. At the same time, she had been kept steadily trusting in Christ and in His full salvation. And was there here no answer to her prayer? Was this not the very self-abasement she had sought,—that very exaltation of Christ which the Spirit had taught her to desire?

Yes, it was really so, and she had failed to perceive it. God had fully answered her prayer, and she had felt no gratitude to Him for it.

And, even up to the present time, He had been answering it without her knowing it. She had been growing—she was conscious she had—in humility and self-abasement; but this growth had never been in such a way as that she could glory in it. God had made her advance, as it were, against her will. She had resisted Him, and done all she could to recall her self-complacency—her self-confidence; but He, in His tender love, had gone on teaching her that which He saw she needed.

The thought of this recalled to her mind the other distinct petition she had offered up before the sacrament,—that God would bring her will into subjection to His, and make her content to learn exactly what He saw fit to teach, whether it were agreeable to her own inclinations or not,—a petition forgotten almost as soon as made. Had she remembered it, she felt that she might have sooner perceived how fully God had answered her first prayer; she might have been saved from the harassing feeling of disappointment which she had so long endured.

But although she had forgotten this request, God had not. It, too, had been answered,—answered in the willingness which had been gradually growing to devote herself to present duties, and trustingly to leave to God the provision for her spiritual necessities and comfort. At first she had striven hard to create in herself the frame of mind she thought most suitable; but God

had shown her the uselessness of all such endeavours, and had gradually led her to trust it all to Him.

Yes, God had answered both her prayers, and was still answering them, even by the very means she had thought most likely to be prejudicial to her growth in grace. Her heart swelled with gratitude and joy, while, at the same time, she was deeply humbled by this fresh sight of her own blindness and self-seeking.

‘How happy you look to-night, Marion,’ said her sister, after watching her for a short time, when she had returned to the drawing-room.

‘Happier than usual, Lucy?’

‘Happier than you have been since you came here. At first, on your arrival, I could not but be struck and pained with the contrast which you seemed to me to present to your former happy self. You appeared to have lost the spring of your earlier religious life, and the cheerfulness that animated your daily duties; and I feared that there was something wrong with your spiritual state, when there were so many indications of a heart ill at ease and unsatisfied. Latterly, that restlessness has disappeared, and left a quiet peacefulness.’

‘Perhaps for one like me, Lucy, the quiet peace is safer than the bright joy. But I have reason to-night for gladness of heart;’ and she told her sister all that had been passing through her mind, and all the goodness and wisdom of the Lord’s dealings with her.

‘And I, too, have an answered prayer,’ said Lucy, while tears of affectionate pleasure rose to her eyes. ‘When mamma was here in summer, we spoke much

about our Marion. And when I heard that you proposed to take the sacrament at that time, I was most unwilling that you should come to me immediately after. I knew you must find the charge of so many children an arduous and distracting business, and I was anxious that you should have remained at home, at least for some weeks; so that, in the quiet time you have there for meditation and reading, you might get the full benefit of your first communion. When all my attempts to get another companion failed, and when I saw how uneasy my husband and mamma were at the thoughts of my being left alone, I determined to set apart a set time for special prayer, that God would make this seeming disadvantage turn to your profit. And you see He has heard and answered me.'

'Indeed, indeed, He has,' said Marion earnestly. 'The necessity of giving my whole attention to the care of the children, was the first thing which opened my eyes to my real frame of mind, and showed me how I was striving to work good in myself, in order that I might rest upon that good, and draw my peace and hope from it, not from the perfect fulness of my blessed Saviour. I have been made to see wherein I was wrong, and how far I had gone astray. God has heard my prayer, while I thought that He had turned away His ear from it; He has given me my request, and in a way better than I had desired, but different from what I had looked for. Although I long thought it to be not so, yet He has taught me to recognise, in His dealings with me, the answered prayer.'

POETRY.

A Lullaby.



COME from the woods, sweet voices ;
Come, lull my baby to sleep :
Sleeping, his heart rejoices ;
Sleeping, his mother weeps.

Birds, with your notes sweet and wild,
Bees, with your quick, humming wing,
Sing in the ears of my child ;
Bright dreams of his father bring.

Tell him how good and how brave,
How kind a heart, and how free,
Lies buried in his green grave,—
Leaving him alone with me.

A Mother's Lament.



WHAT though the sun shine bright ?
To me 'tis darkest night :
All my life's joy and light have left me ;
I loved them alone, and they've left me.

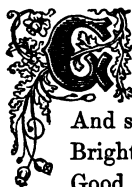
Once round our cheerful hearth
Were heard the sounds of mirth ;
Now all is still as death, they have left me :
I loved them alone, and they've left me.

And can ye all be gone ?
Could ye leave me thus alone ?
Of my friends is there not one ? Have all left me ?
I loved you alone, and you've left me.

All night the lovely band,
All round me seem to stand,
And call me to their land, who have left me,
Come, loved one, to us, though we've left you.

Round my neck they seem to cling,
In my ear their voices ring ;
While sweetly thus they sing, We've come for thee.
I wake ; but again they've left me.

Good Night.

OOD night ! Oh, may thy Father guard
thee
Through the dark and lonesome night,
And still His presence be around thee,
Brighter than the brightest light.
Good night ! The world sleeps, thy Father
wakes.

Remember, when thy heart is weary,
When all around thee are asleep,
And when the hours seem long and dreary,
Who has promised thee to keep.
Good night ! The world sleeps, thy Father wakes.

What though no kind voice now can cheer thee
With the tender words of love,
What though no fond heart now waketh near thee,
He speaks to thee from above.
Good night! The world sleeps, thy Father wakes.

Hear Him assure thee, He ne'er slumbers,
That He keeps thee night and day ;
That thee among His flock He numbers,
And will ever be thy stay.
Good night! The world sleeps, thy Father wakes.

More anxious than the fondest mother,
Is He still to comfort thee ;
More closely than the kindest brother,
Ever does He cling to thee.
Good night! The world sleeps, thy Father wakes.

Each dear token of our affection,
So refreshing to thy heart,
Is but a dim and faint reflection
From the love He will impart.
Good night! The world sleeps, thy Father wakes.


If through this long night sleep should leave thee,
Still upon thy Saviour rest ;
Naught can e'er of thy peace bereave thee,
Lying on His loving breast.
Good night! The world sleeps, thy Father wakes.

Well thou knowest who keeps thee waking,
Well thou knowest He loves thee still ;
Through the night the bright day is breaking,
Love thou seest in every ill.
Good night ! The world sleeps, thy Father wakes.

But should He, in His tender caring,
Gentle slumbers to thee give,
The gift a smile of love is wearing,
From Him who died that thou mightst live.
Good night ! The world sleeps, thy Father wakes.

And still in thy dreams may He be near,
Filling thee with peace and love ;
And in thy sleep those words mayst thou hear,
He who loves thee reigns above.
Good night ! The world sleeps, thy Father wakes.

Jesus the Rock.

ID the stormy ocean I saw thee stand,
And wild, raging waters were all around ;
No help was there near, no promise of
land,
But the dark flood without limit or bound.

So steadily still, thy feet on a rock,
Thine eye ever raised to that bright star,
Thou hast might to withstand each wave's rude shock,
And calmly gaze on that pure beam afar.

But I hear the wind is rising fast,
And clouds o'er thy star are hurrying ;
I see thee bend before the wild blast,
And thy cheering light is wholly gone.

Still firm is thy rock, but unsteady art thou ;
Thine eye now rests on the dark rolling tide.
Giddy, confused, no strength hast thou now,
Thy footing to keep, or thy way to guide.

But though lost be thy hold, thy trust be gone,
Still safe and secure as ever 's thy lot ;
Though thou know'st it not, thou art not alone,
Thy faith may be dead, but thy Saviour is not.

His arm is round thee, and will hold thee fast ;
His presence is with thee, to comfort thy heart ;
Still firmer He clasps, the fiercer the blast,
Not the wildest storm can make Him depart.

THE END.



